Old Corn Gems

NUMBER SIXTY-ONE

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Kernels

A sincere zeal for righteousness will always begin with self-discipline: and in proceeding to help others will endeavor to do so with skill and carefulness, and as gently as possible, remembering the slow and painful processes of one's own self-correction and self-culture.—Z. '96:22.

◆

It is wrong to encourage in one's self a fault-finding disposition, even though the faults of others, if not our own, must be manifest and often painful to us. True brotherly love remembers that we are all imperfect in various ways, that while our neighbors' faults are unpleasant to us, ours may be equally unpleasant to them; and as we desire to have our neighbors considerate of our lameness from the fall and to have patience with our weaknesses, so, in the same brotherly love, we should exercise a similar forbearance.—Z. '96:22.

◆

Language is a vehicle for carrying thoughts; the thoughts must not be jolted out and the empty vehicle alone have consideration—Z. '95:117.

◆

It is possible, even now, for the intelligent Christian to have absolute contentment, to escape the errors of our day and to keep himself actively in the love and service of God. This blessing, with the peace that passeth all understanding, is, however, only for the few: for those whose faith is resting in the perfect work of Christ—in the ransom which he gave—and who are fully consecrated, heart and body, to the Master's will and work and way in every matter. Such he does not leave in darkness and doubt in this day when the hearts of the worldly-wise are "failing them for fear and for looking after those things coming upon the earth," but to them are fulfilled the promises—"He will show you things to come;" "Ye shall know the truth, and the truth shall make you free"—free from the bondage of error, free from the bondage of fear.—Z. '93:3.

◆

To the enlightened Christian, guided in judgment by God's revelation, the Bible, the voice of conscience becomes really the voice of God, and obedience to it is imperative. Any transgression of its commands is sure to bring disaster, more serious by far than any which could come to the natural man, because the Christian has taken the advance steps and has received advance knowledge. To the Christian, therefore, the heeding of the voice of conscience may mean either eternal life or eternal death —the Second Death.—Z. '06:153.

◆

How many there are today, who like Peter attempt to turn aside those who have consecrated themselves as living sacrifices; not that they wish to do evil, but that they have not the spirit of the truth themselves, but the spirit of the world, and hence speak from the worldly standpoint, which is in direct conflict with the divine plan as respects God's consecrated Church. Let each of us take heed first, that we be not thus tools of the Adversary in stumbling others, and second, that we be not stumbled by any of the Adversary's tools who may take such positions, no matter how kind and sympathetic their manner and intentions. If they seek to turn us aside from the narrow path which our Lord marked out, they are not our true friends but most seductive enemies.—Z. '98:110.

◆

"Upon Thy Word I rest,
So strong, so sweet, so sure;
So full of comfort blest,
So wonderful, so pure—
The Word that changeth not, that faileth never!
My King, I rest upon Thy Word forever!"
—Z. '13:270.

◆

Those who have been favored with the Message of Truth and have turned a deaf ear, while still professing to be followers of Christ and perhaps teaching in His name, will find the conditions of the incoming age less favorable to them than to heathen peoples who have never heard the true Message of God, the Gospel of the Kingdom, the establishment of which is now very near.—Z. '16:327.

CONVENTIONS

Eastern Conventions have been arranged, at which Bros. Heard and Zinck will serve, as follows:

Convention at Minneapolis, Minn., July 17th and 18th. For further information apply to Bro. H. M. Nosby, 3145 Park Ave., Minneapolis, Minn.

Convention at Withee, Wis., July 21st and 22nd. For further information apply to Sister Maude Neff, R. 1, Box 89, Withee, Wis.

Convention at Richfield, Wis., July 24th and 25th. For further information apply to Bro. Wm. Dhein, Menomonee Falls, Wis.

Convention at Chicago, Ill., July 28th and 29th. For further information apply to Sister Abrahams, 3140 Lake Park Ave., Chicago, Ill.

From Chicago, Bro. Zinck will return to Minneapolis and visit the different classes in the East, continuing his route to Dallas, Texas; Riverside, California; and Grant's Pass, Oregon.

Bro. Heard will continue from Chicago to Springfield, Ill., July 31st; Kansas City, Mo., August 2nd; and Convention at Yakima, Wash., August 6th and 7th. For further information re the Yakima Convention apply to Sister J. L. Clearwater, 809 N. Third St., Yakima, Wash.

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The Victoria Ecclesia will hold a local convention on July 30th and 31st, at which Brother Palmer will serve. For further information apply to Bro. J. H. Bartlett, 2526 Government St., Victoria, B.C.

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OLD CORN GEMS

NUMBER SIXTY-ONE

"And they did eat of the OLD CORN of the land on the morrow after the Passover . . . and the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the OLD CORN of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year." Joshua 5:11-12.

A SAFE RULE

"WHERE A BROTHER GIVES AN INTERPRETATION OF A SCRIPTURE WHICH DIFFERS FROM THAT GIVEN BY BROTHER RUSSELL, AND BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION SEEMS REASONABLE AND IN HARMONY WITH THE PLAN OF GOD, THEN WE BELIEVE IT A SAFE RULE TO FOLLOW BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION, FOR THE REASON THAT HE IS THE SERVANT OF THE CHURCH, SO CONSTITUTED BY THE LORD FOR THE LAODICEAN PERIOD; AND THEREFORE WE SHOULD EXPECT THE LORD TO TEACH US THROUGH HIM. WHERE THERE ARISES A DOUBT IN THE MIND AS TO WHICH INTERPRETATION IS CORRECT, THEN IT IS ALWAYS SAFER TO RESOLVE THAT DOUBT IN FAVOR OF BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION. WE BELIEVE SUCH TO BE IN HARMONY WITH THE LORD'S WILL." Z. '18:51.

"Consider Him Lest Ye Be Wearied"

"Consider him who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds."

TO "CONSIDER HIM" seems to be to take note of, to have in mind, to reflect upon and not to easily forget how our Lord endured various trials and oppositions of sinners against himself. In our own experiences we have, as the Lord's followers, endured some opposition of sin and sinners against ourselves; but we have not yet resisted unto **blood.** We have not yet passed through the trying experiences through which he passed. When we remember that while we are poor, imperfect creatures like our neighbors, he was "holy, harmless, undefiled," then it is good to reflect that he endured patiently the opposition of sinners. When trying experiences came to him, he did not consider them as being merely from the individual with whom they originated, but as being, on the other hand, under the supervision of the Father. If, therefore, the Father permitted such experiences to come to him, he was bound to prove his loyalty by patient endurance. As he said, **"The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?**—John I. 8:11.

So it is with us, Spiritual Israel. **"The Lord your God proveth you."** (Deut. 13:3.) In proportion as we are able to take our Lord's viewpoint in our experiences in life, we may be calm. If the Father permits trying experiences for our testing, or for the testing or proving of others, in ways we may not understand, it is for us to rejoice to have his will done. The poet has beautifully expressed this thought when he says:—

"My times are in thy hands,
My God, I wish them there."

If we faithfully endure to the end, the reward will be ours. If we prove our loyalty and **keep our faith that God is supervising our affairs,** and that no good thing will he withhold from those who are walking uprightly, we shall some day hear his "Well done, good and faithful servant."

We know that our Lord endured **physical** opposition. But our English word **"contradiction"** properly translates the original, implying **verbal contradiction** of **his words.** As we consider our Lord's case, we see that the people opposed him, not physically, but **in his words, his teachings.** It was left for the high priest and Sanhedrin and soldiers to do him **physical** violence and put him to death: and he could have resisted them if he had so chosen.

"When He Was Reviled, He Reviled Not Again"

The Apostle, therefore, seems to refer to the contradiction of his words. This is implied by St. Peter, who says, "When he was reviled, he reviled not again." (1 Pet. 2:23.) So when we consider the three and a half years of Christ's ministry, we find that his doctrines were disputed, and that he was slandered. The Jews said that he had a demon; that he performed his miracles by the Prince of demons; that he was a blasphemer. These contradictions and oppositions on their part might have called out from him some very just, truthful statements, respecting them. He might have given them as good as he got, and better. He might have told them that the **Devil** was working with **them,** etc. His perfect power of language would have given him ability to more than cope with them. When they thought to entrap him in his **words,** he entrapped them in **their words.** But he reviled not. He did not render evil for evil, nor railing for railing. This, the Apostle shows, is the proper course.

But in the daily affairs of life, when people say all manner of evil against us, when they revile us, it is natural to the fallen flesh to think of something evil to say in return. Thus these things become tests upon us. If we yield to such a spirit, we are following the course of the enemy and not that of the Lord.

"Consider him who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds" when attacked by the Adversary—whoever may be his agents and whatever may be their missiles. He cannot harm but will only increase our reputation in the Lord's sight, if we **endure faithfully**; and he can do no outward harm that God cannot overrule for the **good** of his cause—though that **good** may mean "siftings" of "chaff" and "tares" from the "wheat."

Evil speaking, backbiting and slandering are **strictly forbidden** to God's people as **wholly contrary** to his spirit of **love, even if the evil thing be true.** As a preventive of anything in the nature of slander, the Scriptures very carefully mark out **only one way of redress of grievances.**—Matt. 18:15-17.

Professed Christians Often Worst Scandal-Mongers

Many, among even advanced Christians, seem to be **utterly in ignorance of this Divine ruling,** and hence professed Christians are often the most pronounced scandal-mongers. Yet this is one of the few **special, specific commandments** given by our Lord; and considered in connection with the statement, "Ye are my **friends,** if ye do whatsoever I command you," the constant violation of this, our Lord's command, proves that many are not far advanced in friendship—discipleship.

Let us look carefully at this rule, which if followed would prevent gossip, "evil speaking," "backbiting." See, as above cited, Matt. 18:15-17. Its first provision, for a conference between the principals **alone,** implies candor on the part of the accuser, who thinks that he has suffered. It also implies his thinking no evil of the accused. They meet as "brethren," each thinking **his own course** the **right** one, to discuss the matter: to see whether they can come to the same view. If they agree, all is well; the matter is settled; peace prevails; the threatened break has been averted, and no one is the wiser. In the great majority of cases, a frank, open discussion between the principals will bring about harmony. But both must be equally candid and governed by the Spirit of the Lord.

Thus did our Lord guard his true disciples from the insidious sin of slander, which leads onward to other and grosser works of the flesh and the Devil, and stops growth in the Truth and its spirit of love. Let us also note that those who **hear** slanders and thus encourage slanderers in their course of wrong-doing, are **partakers of their evil deeds**; guilty partners in the violation of the Master's commands. God's true people should refuse to listen to slanders and should point the offender to the Lord's Word and the **only** method therein authorized. Are we wiser than God? Experience teaches that we cannot trust to our own judgments and are on safe ground only when following the voice of the Shepherd implicitly.

We Should Refuse to Hear Gossip and Slander

If any Brother or Sister brings to you an evil report of others, stop him at once, kindly but **firmly.** "Have no fellowship with the unfruitful works of darkness, but rather reprove them." (Eph. 5:11.) Refuse to have any share in this violation of the Master's commands, which does great mischief in the Church. If the Brother or Sister be only a "babe" in spiritual matters, call attention to the Lord's ruling on the subject. (Matt. 18:15; 1 Tim. 5:19.) If the conversation is not addressed to you but merely in your hearing, promptly show your disapproval by withdrawing.

If, after having had his attention called to the Lord's command on this subject, the slanderer still persists in "evil speaking," "backbiting" and telling you his "evil-surmisings," reprove him more sharply, saying as you go, "I cannot, must not, hear you; for if I did, I would be as criminal in the matter as you are, violating the Lord's command. And even if I were to hear your story I could not believe it; for the Christian who does not respect the Lord's Word and follow his Plan for the redress of grievances, shows so little of the Lord's spirit that his word cannot be trusted. He who twists and dodges the Lord's words would not hesitate to twist and misrepresent the words and deeds of fellow-disciples." Then withdraw fellowship from such until his error has been confessed with promises of reform. If to any extent you listen to such conversation, or express **"sympathy"** with it or with the gossiper or slanderer, **you are a partner in the sin and in all its consequences**; and if a "root of bitterness" is thus developed, you are more than likely to be one of those "defiled" by it.—Heb. 12:15.

Be pure: maintain a conscience void of offense toward God and men. Begin with the heart; harbor no thoughts that in any sense of the word would be evil. To make sure of this, have Christ Jesus as your pattern, well and much before your mind. When evil is obtruded upon you, either from without or from within, lift up your heart in prayer to him for the grace promised in every time of need. Keep constantly before you the prayer, "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditations of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my Strength and my Redeemer."—Psa. 19:14.

Let Us Cultivate Appreciation of the Principles of Divine Law

While seeking to follow the various specific commands of Scripture, let us seek more and more to understand and come in sympathy with the **principles which underlie** the Divine Law. These will enable us to judge of the right and the wrong of such of our words, thoughts and acts as may not be particularly specified in the Lord's Word. Indeed, as we come to understand and sympathize with the principles of Divine Law, to that extent we are getting the spirit of the Divine Word. Note the testimony of the Psalmist on this point, "O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day. Thou, **through thy commandments,** hast made me wiser than mine enemies, **for they are ever with me.** I have more understanding than all my teachers, **for thy testimonies are my meditation.** I understand more than the ancients, **because I keep thy precepts.** I have refrained my feet from every evil way, **that I might keep thy Word.** I have not departed from thy judgments, **for thou hast taught me. How sweet**

are thy words unto my taste! yea, sweeter than honey to my mouth! **Through thy precepts** I get understanding; **therefore, I hate every false way. Thy Word** is a lamp unto my feet and a light unto my path."—Psa. 119:97-105.

Shun a contentious and fault-finding disposition as contrary to the spirit, or disposition of Christ—contrary to **love.** A certain amount of combative courage is demanded in overcoming the world, the flesh and the Devil and their various snares. This fighting disposition may become a valuable aid to ourselves and to the Master's cause if rightly and wisely directed against sin, **first** in **ourselves** and **secondly** in others; if used for the Lord and his people and against Satan and all his powers of darkness and superstition. This, in the Scriptures, is called fighting the **good fight,** and we all should be gallant soldiers in this battle for Right and Truth, lovingly defending our Captain's honor and his people's liberties.

The Powers of Evil Would Make Combativeness a Chief Virtue

But such a good use of combativeness is not pleasing to the Prince of this world, who will seek to **pervert** what he cannot directly **use.** Consequently, he attempts with some to make combativeness a chief virtue. He encourages them to fight everything and everybody; the brethren, more than the powers of darkness; nominal churchmen, more than the errors and ignorance which blind them and make them such. Indeed, his desire is to get us to "fight against God."

Let us be on our guard on this point. Let us, first of all, **judge ourselves,** lest we cast a stumbling-block before others; let us fight down in **our own hearts** the wrong spirit which seeks to make mountains out of trifles and disposes us to be captious and contentious over non-essentials. Greater is "He that ruleth his own spirit than he that taketh a city." (Prov. 16:32.) Let us guard ourselves that our defense of the Truth be, not from motives of self-glorification, but from love for the Truth, love for the Lord, for his people, the brethren. If **love** be the impelling spirit, or motive, it will show itself accordingly in a loving, gentle, patient, humble course toward all the fellow-servants. Let us be "gentle toward all." Let "the sword of the Spirit, the Word of God," which is quick and powerful, do all the **cutting.**

Beware of all thoughts, feelings and conditions of heart directly or remotely connected with malice, envy, hatred, strife. Give these no place in your heart even for a moment; for they will surely do **you** great injury, aside from leading to the injury of others. Keep your heart, your will, your intentions and desires full of love toward God and all his creatures—the most fervent toward God, and proportionately toward all who have his spirit and walk in the way of his direction.

Do Not Trust to Conscience Alone

If conscience were a **sufficient** guide you would have no need of the Scriptures. The majority of people have as good as no conscience; for they are blind to the principles and laws of God given to **guide** conscience; and still worse off than these are those mentioned in 1 Tim. 4:2. Hence the imperative necessity for carefully heeding the Lord's Word, and **walking circumspectly** according to its light.

We are not to faint in our minds nor become discouraged, feeling that so much has been said against us that we must give up the race. On the contrary, we are to feel assured like our Lord, that nothing can befall us except with the knowledge of the Father, who is working all things for our good. It was thus our Lord was prepared for his exaltation. So we, if we are rightly exercised by our various experiences and follow as closely as possible the commands laid down for our guidance, will find that even revilings, slanders, oppositions to righteousness, will work out blessings for us, as they did for our Lord.

But how many become weary because they fail to consider what **the Lord** faithfully endured of opposition! If such would consider that the Lord, who was **perfect,** suffered in every sense **unjustly** for righteousness' sake, and that their own conduct is **imperfect,** they would not be weary in well doing, but would learn to fight and to "endure hardness as good soldiers of Jesus Christ"; they would continue to "fight the good fight of faith."

"We have not an High Priest which cannot be touched with a feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we [the Church] are, yet without sin."—Heb. 4:15; Z. '11:122-124.

The Work of Grace in the Heart

"The love of Christ constraineth us."—2 Cor. 5:14.

THE WORD **constrain** has the double thought of drawing together, holding together. The Apostle had been recounting his own activities in the Lord's service, and had stated that with some his course seemed to indicate an unbalanced mind. He explained that this was not so; that he had a sounder mind than ever before. He felt himself bound to Christ, constrained by love of Christ to love Him and all who were His with a pure heart.

Why should this love **constrain?** For this reason: If we reckon that all are dead, then all need the service of the Life-Giver; and if Christ died for all, and if we now have come to life through Him, we should hereafter live not according to, or after, the flesh. We should give up the flesh entirely and live the new life which we have received from Christ. St. Paul would say, I am not mad; but I am so closely drawn to Christ that I have the same sympathetic love for others that He had. As He had laid down His life for the brethren, so would I.

Our Lord's love was specially manifested toward His disciples, and chiefly toward those who were the most zealous and energetic—Peter, James and John having the particular love of the Lord. Similarly the Church is thus instructed. There is no exhortation to lay down our lives in the service of the world, but specially for those of the household of faith. We see that the benefits of Christ's sacrifice are to reach the whole world of mankind, every member of Adam's race.

Assuming, however, that the Lord knew from the very beginning who would betray Him, and that Divine discernment would know all who would go into the Second Death, we could not think that the Lord would do anything on their behalf. In other words, the blessing of God is only for the "Israelites indeed." Only those who will come into harmony with Him will have the rich blessing and favor of the Lord. These are included in the redemptive work, not because of anything in themselves, but because of the love of the Lord, which is broad enough and deep enough for all who will receive it. But God cannot love wicked characters. His blessings are only for those who are His children now, or who **will be**, under the blessings and privileges which He later on will grant. It is our duty to bless all to the extent of our ability.

The Chief Object of Our Training the Development of Love

The work of grace for the Church during this Gospel Age is the transforming of our perverted characters and the re-establishing of them in the likeness of the Divine character, **Love.** Whoever fails to attain this transformation fails to attain God's will concerning him, and must, necessarily, fail to win the prize set before us in the Gospel. We are, to begin with, very poor material out of which to form likenesses of God's dear Son. We were "children of wrath, even as others." (Eph. 2:3.) The original likeness of God, possessed by Father Adam before he transgressed, has been sadly lost in the six thousand years intervening. Hence, instead of finding ourselves in the Divine likeness of love, we find that we were "born in sin and shapen in iniquity" to such a degree that instead of love being the natural, ruling principle in our characters, it is in many instances almost entirely obliterated; and what remains is largely contaminated with evil, self-love and carnal love—perversions which are in direct antagonism with the wholly unselfish love which is the essence of the Divine character.

"This is life eternal, that they might **know Thee,** the only true God"—the God who is Love. (John 17:3.) To **know God** means more than to know something of His loving Plan and character; it means to know God in the sense of **personal acquaintance and intelligent appreciation of His character;** and no one can have this except as he partakes of the Spirit of God, the spirit of holiness, the spirit of love. And this spirit of holiness and love cannot be acquired instantly; it is a growth; and its development is the **chief business** (**and should be the chief concern**) of all who hope to know God in the complete sense which will be rewarded with **life eternal.**

But since our transformation of mind or will is not accompanied by a physical transformation, or restitution, it follows that so long as we are in the flesh we shall have to contend against its inherited weaknesses and disposition to selfishness and sin. But this sharp and continual conflict not only selects a special, overcoming class, but serves to develop the desired character more quickly than will the more easy processes of the Millennial Age. In consequence, while it will require nearly a thousand years for the world's perfecting, the perfecting of the saints in character may be accomplished in a few years, under the special training of sharp discipline and the special course of instruction designed for the "little flock." But whether in a few years or many years, and whether with little or much friction with adversity, **the transformation and polishing of character must be accomplished.** This love-**likeness** of our wills to the will of God is **the end to be sought,** if we would finish our course with joy and with good hopes for the eternal glory.

We Must Learn Thoroughly the Lesson of Love

If we possess the love of God in our hearts it will rule all the affairs of our lives and will make us God-like in thoughts, actions and words. In the School of Christ, the great lesson which the Master is teaching us day by day is the lesson of **love,** which we must learn thoroughly if we would attain "the mark for the prize of our high calling."

In the School of Christ, all the instructions of the Divine Word and providences are intended to develop our hearts and influence our conduct in harmony with the lines of **love.** While the fruits and graces—meekness, gentleness, patience, etc.—are manifestations of the Spirit, yet the Holy Spirit must be present before these manifestations could appear at all; and while the **spirit** might be perfect, its manifestations might be imperfect. The vine may be good, but for a season the grapes will be immature. So with these graces of the Spirit. They are outward manifestations of the inward condition of the **heart,** which may attain perfection before these graces are perfect. Indeed, these graces may never be perfect on this side of the veil.

At the moment of making consecration, before we had borne any fruits of the Spirit, we were not at the mark of perfect love. We were consecrated and had the right spirit, so far as we had knowledge. But we had not a sufficiency of knowledge to recognize what would be expected of us. For this we needed some development, some instruction in the School of Christ. The knowledge of what it would cost to follow Christ came gradually. If the will kept up with the knowledge, one would reach the mark of perfect love in the heart. The manifestations of the graces of character which this condition of heart produces may never be fully perfect in the present life, but only when we have the perfect bodies. The heart which shall have reached this condition will be in perfect tune with the conditions which will obtain on the other side.

"By Their Fruits Shall Ye Know Them"; Yet Perfection in the Flesh Is Impossible

We must recognize each other, in the good professions which we make to each other and in the evidences of these professions which are manifest.

As a gardener might go to his vine and look through the different branches for grapes, so the Lord knows whether the heart is in the proper attitude to bring forth fruit. Of those who have openly professed a thorough consecration to the Lord, all those whose lives do not contradict their profession, and who are walking, not after the flesh, but after the Spirit, may be known and recognized by us in the same way by which they will recognize us. "By their fruits we shall know them"—**by the outward obedience,** but not by the full fruit-development. We know each other, therefore, not by the full development of the fruits, but by the measure of the obedience and striving to obey the Lord.

Absolute perfection would mean perfection of thought, word and deed, which is not our condition at the present time. The most that any of us can have now is perfection of love in our hearts; that is, a perfect love for God, for the Truth and for the brethren. Perfect love leads to sacrifice. "If ye love Me, keep My commandments." (John 14:15.) **Those who have perfect love will fulfil their sacrifices.** But at any time one may pass from the stage of perfect love to that of alienation and opposition. The person might come into such a condition of heart that the fervency of his love would become cool. Gradually he would become estranged from the Lord, and might become identified with the "great company" class. Then, if the chastisements of the Time of Trouble did not lead to a thorough reformation, he would pass on to the Second Death.

After Love's provision of the Lamb of God (the Ransom-price for all mankind laid down by Him, and the imputation of His merit to the Church), all the various steps for our deliverance from sin are along the line of developing us in the character of **love,** the character of God, **which alone,** according to the Divine standard, will make us acceptable before the Father and bring to us His grace of everlasting life. How important, then, that we should be "taught of God" and develop this character!

The work of grace for the world, during the Millennial Age, will be to make known to all mankind the gracious character of God and His provision for the salvation of all; and to transform all who are willing, from the depravity of sin to perfection of character—Love; making mankind once more images of God. This transformation of their wills, accompanied by a gradual physical transformation, will remove from them all the blemishes of sin and all hereditary inclinations thereto and leave them in the likeness of God, with a recollection of the undesirability of sin and its evil consequences.—Z. '11:182, 183.

"His Loving-Kindness, O How Great!"

"Because Thy loving-kindness is better than life, my lips shall praise Thee."—Psalm 63:3.

GOD has a kindness of nature and disposition, a loving-kindness, that is general, that goes out, in one sense of the word, to all of His creatures—not only the intelligent, but the unintelligent creatures of His hand. He bestows His kindness, His favors, upon the just and the unjust. He sends His sunshine and His rain upon the good and the evil. But there is a special loving-kindness, a special love which He reserves for those who have lovable qualities of heart—those who have such traits of character as permit Him thus to love them—just as every good person loves every other person who is good and noble-hearted.

God has such a love for the holy angels. He had such a love for Adam before he sinned. And since the sin, He has a sentiment of loving-kindness toward those of Adam's race who, realizing their sin, desire to turn back to Him and to do His will. His loving-kindness has led Him to make a wonderful provision for these. He has provided that some shall be of the earthly nature, to receive the blessing of life everlasting here upon earth, after it has been brought to Edenic perfection. He has provided for others to be of the spiritual nature. Truly,

"There's a wideness in God's mercy
Like the wideness of the sea!"

But God does not love the wilful sinner. This is in harmony with righteousness. We may love the ignorant, who violate the Law of God because of a lack of knowledge, of proper information; but we could not rightly love one who is wicked, whose intention of heart, of will, is to do wrong. God has no love for the incorrigibly wicked. "All the wicked will He destroy." He has arranged that only those who shall come into accord with His righteousness may enjoy the blessing of eternal life. These shall have an eternity of happiness; they shall be the recipients of His loving favor everlastingly.

The Psalmist had a taste of the loving-kindness of God in his own experiences. When he was anointed to be king of Israel, he knew that he had found favor in God's sight. And later, when he did things that were wrong, God chastised him, punished him in love, because David was a man after the Lord's own heart—had a desire to do right—to do God's will. As the needle of a compass may under certain circumstances be detracted from its normal condition of pointing toward the pole, just so some attraction at times influenced David and led him into a wrong course. But as soon as the besetment was past, or he was led of the Lord to see his sin, his heart returned fully to Jehovah; as the needle of the compass returns and again points to the pole. Therefore King David declared that life without God's loving-kindness would be worth nothing to him; he would not appreciate his life if cut off from the favor of the Lord. This being the case, his lips would always confess the Lord—tell forth His loving-kindness, show forth His praises.

Our Anointing Far Superior

And this is still more true of us who are now the Lord's truly consecrated children, who are daily striving to serve Him and to follow the Master. We who by the grace of God have come into covenant relationship with Him since the Atonement for sin has been made have become sons of God, and have been begotten of the Holy Spirit. We have come thus into the anointed Body of Christ. We have not been anointed to an earthly throne, as was David, but our anointing does more: it anoints us to a Heavenly Throne, to share in the rulership of the entire earth.

No king or emperor on any earthly throne can hope to reign for more than a few brief years. But those who shall be accounted worthy to reign with Messiah, to share His Throne, shall reign for a thousand years. And this is only the beginning of their glory. Our Father in Heaven, who is now training and preparing us for this glorious exaltation through His Only Begotten Son, with whom we are to reign, gives us the assurance that He will be with us to guide our way; that all things shall work together for good to us, because we love Him and are called according to His purpose.

So we, above all other people in the world's history, have the loving-kindness of God manifested toward us. We have His exceeding great and precious promises. We are the recipients of His special love. And the more we appreciate this love and these glorious promises and the bountiful provisions of His grace, the more our hearts respond in gratitude, the more His loving-kindness becomes a reality to us, and the more are we ready to lay down our lives in His service.

It was thus with Jesus. He preferred the Father's favor above all else. And He, through the Father's arrangement, opened up this new and living way for us, that we, by becoming His disciples, may share with Him God's special loving-kindness and matchless promises, granted only to those "who follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth." Surely our lips shall praise our God! And not only so, but our pocketbooks, our bank accounts, and our influence shall praise Him! All that we have shall praise the Lord; and all that we ever hope to have! . . .

Text Applicable Only to Saints

The Prophet David in our text spoke prophetically of the Church of Christ. These words could apply to none other than saints of God. None but those who walk and talk with God would esteem His favor more precious and desirable than their earthly life. If we ask the average nominal Christian to weigh this matter, and tell us if he would exchange this life for the favor of the Lord—putting in one side of the balance all the good things, hopes, ambitions, family ties, social position, churchianity, esteem of men, and putting in the other side of the scale God's favor—he will hesitate, and will eventually decide in favor of the things of this life.

The reason for this is that such do not highly appreciate Divine favor. They have heard and believed certain things about the Almighty, some of them true and some false; but the misrepresentation of God's character and Plan, together with the worldly influences surrounding them, have largely neutralized and offset and made non-effective the truths which they have learned, and they lack confidence in the things unseen. Hence worldly interests outweigh their appreciation of Divine favor—ten to one.

Those who have, through the Plan of the Ages, come to see the loving-kindness and mercy of the Lord are, if they are children of God at all, being put to the test. If they are merely glad to find out that there is no place of eternal torture, and that God's loving Plan includes the whole human race, their hearts are not touched to responsiveness by this manifestation of His great love. They will go on their way, rejoicing that they have been delivered from the bondage of error, but will be like the nine lepers who were healed by the Master, yet did not return to give Him the glory, nor to offer themselves in service to Him. And these, alas, are the majority! We are now in the great day of proving. Who will be able to stand the test in this evil time?

God the Sun of Our Soul

This loving favor of God, which is so appreciated by the true saints, is not a favor respecting future prospects and hopes merely, but it is the blessed possession also of the present life. Gradually these come to prize the communion and fellowship of the Lord to such a degree that any interruption of this communion produces misery of soul. It brings an aching void that nothing else can fill. This sentiment is beautifully expressed in the hymn we often sing:

> "Sun of my soul, my Father dear,
> I know no night when Thou art near;
> O, may no earth-born cloud arise
> To hide Thee from Thy servant's eyes!"

The true child of God will walk so closely with Him that nothing, however sweet or precious to the natural man, will be permitted to shut from him his Father's face. This would be esteemed a calamity with which nothing else could compare. He would rather cut off anything as dear as a right hand, or pluck out of his life anything as precious as an eye, than that it should come between himself and his Heavenly Friend, whom He has come to love above all else beside. God is truly to these the Sun of their soul, without whom life would become the blackness of night.

"The Darkness Hateth the Light"

Some professed disciples of Christ may say that a Christian life will not cost earthly friendships; that such an idea is an exaggeration; that it is an extreme view of what is required of a Christian; that a course which produces such a result is an unreasonable one. But no! Our Master's words are as true today as when they were spoken: "If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, therefore the world hateth you." (John 15:19.) The declaration of the Apostle still holds good: "Yea, and all who live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution." —2 Tim. 3:12.

Why did the Master suffer the loss of social position and of favor with the churchianity of His day? Why did the Doctors of Divinity and the notables among the religionists hide their faces from Him? Why did they finally become so embittered against Him that they crucified Him? Was it because of evil-doing on His part? Nay; for He went about doing good. It was because He told the truth. He declared truths which they themselves recognized as such, but with which they had so mixed the "traditions of the elders" that they were too stupefied, drunken and blinded to take anything but a perverted view of our Lord's work and teachings. Their hearts were not in the right attitude before God. "The darkness hateth the light."

The Master's persecutions came not from the outside world, but from the professed holy people of His time. So has it ever been since, and so is it today. Those who now oppose the Truth are not worldly people outside of the churches, with but few exceptions; but they are zealous sectarians, whom Satan has blinded with his false doctrines and misrepresentations. We are not to be surprised, therefore, that wherever the Truth goes it will be a Sword to separate, as our Lord declared. These conditions prove a test to the followers of Jesus. Are we willing to bear the hatred, the scorn, the contumely, which loyalty to the Truth brings? Is our Father's loving favor more, far more, to us than the favor and smiles of the whole world—even more, far more to us than life itself?

The Glorious Harp of the Ages

If so, we can go forth in His name, rejoicing as we go, praising Him with our lips, singing the New Song which he hath put into our mouths, "even the loving kindness of our God." It costs something to sing this song.' Only those who have learned to play upon the Harp of God, who have all its strings attuned to perfect harmony, can properly render this "Song of Moses and the Lamb." Never until today has it been possible to produce such melody from this wonderful Harp; for never before have all its chords been properly placed and attuned. Now its music is entrancing! Then let us take this wonderful Harp of the Ages, and as we sweep its chords, let us sing with the spirit and with the understanding this wondrous, glad New Song!—Z. '14:118-120.

Faith, the Basis of True Rest

"We which have believed do enter unto rest."—Hebrews 4:3.

IN OUR text St. Paul refers to the fact that the Law provided for the Jew a physical rest for the seventh day of the week, for the seventh year and for the forty-ninth and fiftieth years; and that these Sabbaths were typical of a better rest. He points out that all who believe in Christ enter into rest, and thus keep a continual Sabbath. As New Creatures we rest all the time, if so be we abide in the Lord and in His promises.

The Apostle says that faith is necessary to rest. He tells us what to do in order to avail ourselves of that which God has already provided for us. He shows us that God made promises to Abraham, and these were reiterated to Isaac and to Jacob. God declared His purpose to have a special, holy nation, and promised Abraham that the blessing of the world should come through his Seed, who would constitute this chosen nation. The promises were great and precious.

Abraham believed the Message and was glad. He rested. He did not know the way by which God would bring about the blessing, but he had the promise of God, confirmed by His Oath. He did not need to know then about the Lord Jesus or the Plan of Salvation. He had full rest in fully believing God; and so did as many of his posterity as exercised the same faith as Abraham. Isaac and Jacob and many of the Prophets, including the Prophet David, thus trusted God. Their writings show that they were fully in harmony with God. They realized that He had made a gracious provision for the future, and that this provision was for the world in general; yet they knew that they were to have a "better resurrection" than that of the world. They had a rest of faith in these things that God had not yet accomplished.

Our Lord Jesus declared that Abraham saw His day and was glad. He did not see it with his natural eye, but with the eye of faith. He saw the Day in which Christ, who has died for all men, will uplift the human family, raising the world up out of sin and death—first exalting His Bride, and finally causing the blessing of God to extend to every creature. This is just what God promised to Abraham—"In thee and in thy Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed." Abraham was glad, and everybody else is glad who sees it. Abraham was content to see that there was to be a great blessing for his posterity, and through them for the world. He did not see God's Plan clearly, as we see it, but he saw enough to make him rejoice.—John 8:56.

Increasing Light and Greater Tests

Coming down to our own Age, we see that a greater light, a greater privilege, has brought greater tests of faith in many respects. Abraham was tested in that he was told to offer his son Isaac in sacrifice. He knew that the promises were to be fulfilled through this son, but he said, It is for me to be obedient; God can raise my son from the dead. This shall not hinder my faith in the out-working of God's Plan.

We of the Gospel Age have not heard God's voice speaking to us audibly, as did Abraham; but we live in the time of a further development of the great Plan of God. He has sent His Son into the world, who was made flesh and dwelt among us, and who died, "the Just for the unjust."

Unbelief would assert that if Jesus had been the Son of God He would not have died; but there was a mortgage held on the human race by Justice, and their case was hopeless unless a Redeemer should be provided. So the eye of faith today is able to grasp God's purposes in a fuller way than did Abraham. Yet we do not know that our faith is any greater than his; for even if we have more trials and difficulties, we have also greater opportunities and greater light. Abraham had full faith, full confidence in God, and no one could have more than this.

The Lord's people of the present time believe that mankind are to be rescued from sin and death. Some have more knowledge than others, and more testing; some who have less capacity cannot endure so severe testing, nor can they enjoy so fully. But all can have the same rest that Abraham had—the rest of faith in God. God has promised to His saints a resurrection to glory and honor and blessing. But these are not actual as yet. We have now only the earnest of this inheritance. It is for faith to triumph and to realize that God can bring us to that glorious condition which He has promised; and He will, if we are faithful. Each in proportion to his knowledge and faith will have rest. The most learned and the most ignorant can have this rest, if only they believe God.

Rest Proportionate to Faith

The rest we have entered into is not our ultimate rest. If we have the faith today, we may have the rest today; if we lose the faith, we also lose the rest. But a perfect, permanent rest awaits us. God has promised us certain great and precious things. He is our Creator and our Father, and will do for us the things He has promised. And according to our **faith** it will be unto us—much faith, much rest; little faith, little rest. Those who are in harmony with God believe His testimony.

This does not imply that all who have been of God's children have believed all of the Divine Plan; for we see that this would not be possible. Some have had greater opportunity for believing; and some have had less. We who live today have much more advantage than those who lived prior to our day. Our test, then, does not come so much from lack of **knowledge**; but it is a test of faith in God, and obedience to the light now given us. Having this great flood of light now granted at the close of this Age, our faith should be very strong, and we should seek to increase it more and more by gaining all the knowledge now due. We should grow in faith, grow in grace, grow in knowledge and grow in love. We enter into a deeper and more intelligent rest if we avail ourselves of the helps which the Lord has provided for us. If we truly **believe**, we will manifest our belief by works in harmony therewith.

In Scriptural usage the word **believe** implies much more than merely to acknowledge a fact or a truth. The great Truth before us all is what the Bible calls the Gospel, the Good Tidings. The belief referred to in our text is belief in this Gospel: We who believe the Gospel do enter into rest. What is the Gospel that we believe? It includes all the features of God's love and mercy to us as a fallen race—His proposition for eternal life through Christ, with all the blessings this involves. To the Church the Gospel—the Good Tidings—includes also the offer to us of joint-heirship with Christ in the Kingdom.

One might have an intellectual belief in these promised blessings without entering into the rest mentioned in our text. But this form of belief is evidently not in the Apostle's thought. To the extent that the individual recognizes those facts, accepts them and acts upon them, to that extent he enters into rest. If he believes partially, he rests in that proportion; if he believes more, he rests more; if he believes perfectly, he has perfect rest, and will show his faith by his works. The Gospel Message is so wonderful that any one who believes it will desire to avail himself of its blessings. If the opportunity is presented of becoming a joint-heir with Jesus to the Divine nature, and the mind can grasp the proposition, one would really be a fool if he did not accept such an offer. So any one who does not accept does not believe, in the sense the word is used in our text. All who **truly believe** will accept such an offer and will enter into rest by faith.

Heart Confidence Essential

The expression of the text, "We who have believed," implies that the belief has reached the **heart**, and will thus affect our course in life. And the second part of the statement, "do enter into rest," implies that the rest is gradually coming to him because he has believed. He has first believed; and the fulness of rest is a condition to be attained gradually as his faith grows stronger, and as he learns to appreciate more fully what he has accepted.

"With the **heart** man believeth," and not merely with the **head**. It is not a mere **intellectual** belief. When we accept the Gospel as a **fact**, and enter fully into it, we begin at once to have a measure of this rest; and as we learn by our experiences how true the Lord is to all His promises to us, the rest becomes more deep and abiding. The belief was at first a full belief in the Message of God; but as we grow in grace and in the knowledge of God, the more firm and established does our faith become, and our rest is proportionate.—Z. '14:104, 105.

Sowing and Reaping

"Be not deceived. . . . he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting."—Gal. 6:7, 8.

THE thought of **sowing** is that of planting with a view to development or result. Some time the harvest will come. All of our thoughts, all of our actions, have an effect on future character. Little by little the character is made up. The sowing of today will bring the reaping of tomorrow. If our thoughts and our attention are given to earthly things, the result will be an increase of development along earthly lines; but if our thoughts and attention are given to heavenly things, the development will be along spiritual lines.

Sowing to the flesh, minding the things of the flesh, means gratification of the desires of the flesh, minding the things that are craved by our fallen nature. If yielded to, these cravings will grow stronger and stronger. It is a mistake to suppose, as some do, that a reasonable gratification of the flesh is proper. Every gratification of the fallen flesh satiates only the animal propensities. Those who continue to yield to these propensities will ultimately reach corruption, death—the Second Death. Those who mind spiritual things set their affections on things above, not on things of earth; those who seek to develop themselves along spiritual lines, will progress in spiritual attainment. In due time such will reap a character likeness to the Lord, and become copies of God's dear Son, sanctified more and more through the Truth. To such is promised the gift of life eternal.

The words of our text are addressed to the Church, and relate, therefore, to "those who have made a covenant with the Lord by sacrifice." If these live after the flesh, they shall die, as the Apostle says; for they have already surrendered their human life-rights. If by earnest endeavors they seek to lay down their lives and to develop the new life by mortifying the flesh, by putting it to death, by striving to overcome the weaknesses which they inherit, they shall shortly be rid of all the impediments and be clothed upon with the new body. Then they shall be like the Lord.

Few Realize the Extent of Personal Responsibility for Character

Comparatively few realize to what extent we form our own characters, to what extent our minds, our affections, are gardens in which we may plant either the thorns and thistles of sin, or the merely moral and practical qualities corresponding to the useful vegetables, or those seeds which produce the fragrant and beautiful flowers and fruits which more particularly represent the heavenly and spiritual graces. Whatsoever a man soweth he shall also reap, whether he sow to the flesh or to the spirit. Whoever, therefore, seeks for the heavenly things, joint-heirship in the Kingdom, etc., must plant, or set out in his mind, in his affections, those qualities and graces which the Lord marks out as essential to the development of characters such as will be "meet for the inheritance of the saints in light."—Col. 1:12.

Thus the Father throws upon all those whom he calls to this "high-calling," this "heavenly-calling," and who accept the call and make a covenant thereunder, the responsibility for their success or their failure in attaining the prize. Through his Word he tells them of their own natural weaknesses and imperfections, and shows them how he has provided a full off-set or counterbalance for these imperfections in the merit and sacrifice of the Redeemer; he shows them also what are the fruits and graces of the Spirit which they must possess, in heart, at least, if they would be joint-heirs with Christ; he shows them also, in the Redeemer's life as well as in his teachings, the copy which all must follow who would reach the same glorious station and be his joint-heirs.

We might look at this matter merely from the standpoint of the responsibility which it throws upon us, and might well feel overawed thereby. Rather, however, we should view it from the standpoint of Divine grace, and consider what a blessed privilege has been granted us, of being transformed by the renewing of our minds, that we may come more and more to know and to strive for the good and acceptable and perfect will of God. In addition to all this, God has set before us the grandest reward imaginable for the doing of that which is merely our duty and our reasonable service—the doing of that which would bring us the largest measure of joy and peace, aside from a future reward.—2 Pet. 1:3, 4.

We Need Constantly to Plant Good Seeds and Weed Out the Evil

There is for all mankind a natural attraction toward earthly things; even though, during this reign of evil, the earthly things are blemished and in many respects distasteful to those who have learned to love righteousness and hate iniquity, there is still, nevertheless, a strong attraction toward the marred and blemished earthly things. Like weeds, earthly affections and desires spring spontaneously from seeds which come we know not whence. The Christian, therefore, who would keep his heart in the love of God, must not only keep planting good seeds, keep setting his affections on heavenly things, but he must keep rooting out the weeds of earthly desire and attraction.

Our new life is not manifest to all, nor upon all occasions to any. This the Apostle intimates when he says, "Your life is hid with Christ in God"; it is a life of new desires, new aims, new aspirations, which the world can neither see nor fully appreciate, though it sees some outward manifestations of the new life in our daily conduct. Even the "brethren" may not be able to appreciate the progress of the new life in us; and we ourselves may at times be perplexed respecting the rapidity and strength of its growth; and we may need to look back over weeks or months, or perhaps years, in order to determine unquestionably that it is growing. Our new life, represented by our endeavors to follow the will of Christ, is hidden thus in Christ and in the Father.

In harmony with this thought the Apostle in one place declares that neither the world nor the brethren were capable of judging him—that only the Lord, who could read the heart and know all the conditions, testings and weaknesses to be striven against, could properly judge him. He even declares, "Yea, I judge not mine own self." (1 Cor. 4:3.) It is an excellent plan neither to condemn others who claim to be walking conscientiously as children of the Lord, nor even to condemn ourselves if we are sincerely striving to do the Lord's will. We should simply press along, day by day, doing the best we can to cultivate the heavenly graces and to serve our Master, leaving all the results with the Lord. He careth for us, and so long as our hopes and aims and objects of life are centered in the heavenly things and our lives thus hid with Christ in God, we need fear no evil, present or future; for the Lord will be with us and bless us and keep us from falling and, ultimately, present us to the Heavenly Father both blameless and faultless.

Putting Off and Putting On

Coming down to a particularization of the changes which take place in those who have consecrated themselves wholly to the Lord, the Apostle enumerates certain alterations of disposition which should be attempted and, so far as possible, accomplished, namely, the putting away of all the following: anger, wrath, malice, evil-speaking, impurity of language and falsehood in its every form. (Col. 3:8, 9.) The necessity for such correction of life might, at first thought, seem to be unnecessary to mention, such evil traits being too coarse and entirely opposed to every true Christian principle; but, as we scrutinize the matter we find that the Apostle has really taken into his list nearly all the weaknesses of the flesh which beset those who have become "New Creatures in Christ."

What is more common with Christian people than to become angry? How many there are who have named the name of Christ, but who have malicious or, at least, unkind thoughts respecting others, and who harbor these, permitting them at times to influence their conduct! How many are there who indulge in evil-speaking—that is, slander (here translated **blasphemy**)! This is often done in such a manner as to deceive, not only the hearer, but also the speaker as respects his real intention in speaking of others discreditably, unkindly.

If all evil and impure language were avoided, what a wonderful world this would be! Every Christian should see to it that, henceforth, every word which proceeds from his mouth shall be such as will minister grace to the hearers, such words as will do **only good** and be **edifying.** Finally, how much need there is, not only of having good intentions in the heart, but also of expressing those good intentions truthfully one to another, without deception, without hypocrisy. But it requires that a heart be very pure and very full of love if it would be very truthful; otherwise it would lead to trouble continually. If the unloving, ungenerous, unkind hearts, full of evil surmising, malice, hatred and strife, were to express themselves frankly it would add immensely to the trouble of the world. The Apostle therefore urges, first the **purifying of the heart,** and then general candor.

With the thought before our minds of the oneness and equality of those who have been accepted into the Body of Christ, the Apostle urges upon our attention the necessity not only of putting off the evil dispositions of our fallen flesh, but also of putting on, cultivating, the various graces of the Spirit exemplified in our Head, Christ Jesus.—Col. 3:12-14.

He specifies these: (1) **Compassionate sentiments;** a disposition of largeness and generosity of heart toward everybody and everything—toward the saints, toward our neighbors, friends and relatives, toward our enemies, and toward the brute creation. Amplifying, he continues, showing that it would imply (2) kindness toward all; (3) humbleness of mind, the reverse of boastfulness, headiness, arrogance; (4) meekness, or gentleness of disposition; (5) long-suffering, or patient endurance with the faults and weaknesses of others. It implies that we should bear with one another's peculiarities of temperament and disposition, freely forgiving one another, if there be found cause of offense in each other—learning the meanwhile to correct ourselves, as we see our own blemishes mirrored in others. And the standard for all this course of conduct is found in the Lord's course toward us; for he surely has been generous, kind, forbearing and forgiving.

These Injunctions Are Addressed to the Church Only

The Apostle brings to the attention of the "holy and beloved," the Elect, the fact that he is not attempting a reformation of the world along these lines, but merely a transformation of those who have entered into a special covenant with the Lord. All who have thus covenanted with the Lord and who hope to make their "calling and election sure" to membership in the glorified Church, will not only seek to cultivate these fruits of the Spirit in their own lives, but also to assist in the cultivation of the same fruits, as they may have opportunity, in their Christian friends and neighbors; and above all, will seek to exercise so good an influence upon their own families that, as their children receive from them, as parents, the natural life and the necessary instructions and start therein, these may also, if possible, receive from them a start in the new life, and the necessary instructions and equipment for it.

But the Apostle, as the mouthpiece of the Holy Spirit, is a thorough instructor. Not only does he tell us what **dis-graces** to put off and what **graces** to put on, but, viewing the Lord's Body arrayed in these qualities of heart—compassion, kindness, humility, meekness, patient endurance, forbearance and forgiveness, he adds, "And **above all these** put on **love,** which is the bond of perfectness." Love is thus pictured as the "girdle" which binds and holds in place the folds of the robe of Christ's righteousness with its various graces. In other words, the Apostle would have us see that forbearance, meekness, patience, etc., must not be matters merely of courtesy or merely of policy. However much they might partake of these qualities in the beginning, the wearers will not be perfected in heart, nor be fit for the Kingdom, until they have reached the place where these various graces of their wills, or intentions, are bound to them by the cords of love—love for the Lord, love for righteousness, love for the "brethren," and sympathetic love for the whole groaning creation. Love is, indeed, "the bond of perfectness," the very Spirit of the Lord.

Can We Be Deceived in This Matter?

In our text the Apostle says, "Be not deceived." The question naturally suggests itself, Is there danger that we may not know whether we are sowing to the spirit or sowing to the flesh? We answer, there is danger of being deceived along this line. The Scriptures represent that the flesh is very crafty; that the natural mind is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked, and that the new mind needs to guard continually lest it fall into a trap of the old nature. If one is living according to the flesh, he may expect to reap accordingly. Though others may be deceived, God cannot be mocked by our outward service of him and his Truth while we inwardly live according to the flesh. If we plant corn, we reap corn; if we sow wheat, we reap wheat. In all the affairs of our lives we are either building up the old nature that we agreed should be destroyed, or faithfully seeing to it that the deeds of the flesh are mortified and killed, that we may prosper as New Creatures.

We "Sow to the flesh" every time we allow the fleshly, selfish, unjust, unrighteous desires of the flesh to have sway in our hearts and lives. Each sowing makes more sure the end of the way, which is death—Second Death. On the contrary, each sowing to the Spirit, each resistance of the desires of the flesh toward selfishness, etc., and each exercise of the new mind, of the new will, toward the things that are pure, the things that are noble, the things that are good, the things that are true, the things that are spiritual, is a sowing to the Spirit, which, if persevered in, will ultimately bring the attainment of the Lord's gracious promises and arrangements—everlasting life and the Kingdom. —Z. '11:167-169.

Control of the Tongue a Necessity

"I say unto you, that every idle [unprofitable or pernicious] word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the Day of Judgment."—Matthew 12:36.

OUR LORD was addressing some of the Scribes and Pharisees who were trying to "catch Him in His words"—to take advantage of technicalities of language. In their endeavor to oppose Him, those Scribes and Pharisees were doing everything they could to discomfort or vanquish Him in His reasoning, even going to the extent of using arguments which they did not really believe. This is a very dangerous procedure. No matter how just we think our cause to be as a whole, we are not to resort to any misuse of language to uphold what we believe to be the Truth.

Possibly those Pharisees might have said amongst themselves, "We must use strong arguments to keep ahead of that Nazarene. He uses strong language Himself. We must hold up our end of the controversy, and not show the white feather." But this position did not justify their conduct. Since Justice is the foundation of the Throne of God, any attempt to take advantage of another in any manner whatever will surely bring its own punishment.

From our Lord's comments at various times on the subject of the **tongue** we realize that in His day there must have been some seriously wrong condition prevailing amongst those with whom He came in contact. The Scribes and Pharisees attributed evil power to Him, and declared that He was the tool of Satan—that Satan was speaking through Him, etc. At first our Lord told them in a general way that they deceived themselves. Later, He reproved them severely and showed the fallacy of their arguments. In connection with our text He declared that by their words they should be condemned—be dealt with, corrected in righteousness and brought to true reformation, or else perish in the Second Death.

The Power of the Tongue

Human beings are the only earthly creatures that can talk—whether orally or in writing or otherwise. More and more the people of God realize the wisdom of the Apostle James' statement that although the tongue is a little member, yet it is the most dangerous of all, because it has the widest influence. If a man sin not with his tongue, he is a perfect man. (James 3:2.) We cannot estimate the possible results of our words. This influence may reach even to the ends of the earth. Therefore we are to consider carefully what we may say, in order to determine whether our words will glorify God or whether they will dishonor Him—whether they will stir up good thoughts and impulses in the minds of others or whether they will stir up that which is evil.

In His Wisdom God has seen fit so to create us that our conduct of today has much to do with our character of tomorrow. Thus we are either making or breaking character continually. It is well that all should know this fact. Not only worldly people, but Christians also, should understand this principle: for Christians are now on trial for glory, honor and immortality. Therefore by neglecting to weigh carefully their words they might lose the great prize for which they are striving.

The Day of Judgment

By way of emphasis our Lord declared that every idle word—every unprofitable utterance—must be accounted for in a day of reckoning. With the Church, we understand the Scriptures to teach that this day of reckoning is this Gospel Age. Daily are we to go to our Heavenly Father and say, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those that trespass against us." Not only must we render up our account daily, but at the end of our course there will be a general summing up. By this we do not understand that at the end of our race we shall be lined up and questioned about every word of our experience, but that each one who comes into contact with the Truth is either building up character or else breaking it down, and that his character at the end of his probation will determine his reward. As a pupil daily learns his lessons and prepares himself for the final examinations at the end of the year, when there is a general testing of his knowledge, so with the pupils in the School of Christ. Day by day our Master deals with us; but at the end of our course there is to be a summing up.

Doubtless there are in every one of us some things that are disapproved of the Lord; for we all have the treasure of the New Mind in earthen vessels and therefore cannot do as we would. But we have pledged ourselves to serve the Lord and to be loyal in doing His will. Therefore He is dealing with us **now**. In so doing, He warns us that the tongue is a very important member of our body, and that we are to be careful how we use it; for it will have a bearing upon the final decision. . . .

Our Lord's Estimate of Slander

Our Lord declares that the tongue is so important a member that it represents our hearts more accurately than does anything else. The hand might do a good deed, yet the heart might be very different from the hand. In fact, the hand might not express the real sentiment of the heart at all. But the tongue is sure to give utterance to what is really in the heart. Therefore by our words we are daily either building up or tearing down character.

There is a spirit which shoots out bitter words. From the standpoint of the Lord, this is **murder.** Thus at the end of the Jewish Age the Scribes and Pharisees criticised and slandered our Lord. Although from their knowledge of the Law they knew that they would be accountable for their actions, yet they did not appreciate the fact that they would be judged by their words. . . .

Special Bridles for the Tongue

Under stress of sudden temptation the Lord's people, who are now on judgment, might impulsively say that which is not pleasing to the Master. But we must **learn** not to speak thoughtlessly; we must learn to weigh our utterances. Since we are servants of God, we should ever take heed to our ways, in order to render the best possible service. We are not merely to have a good will to do that which is right; we are to seek to bridle our tongues. Whatever vows or resolutions or restraints we may seek to put upon our tongues may be considered as bridles, by which we are determined to bring ourselves into full subjection to the will of God.

So long as Satan and his demon host are at large, the Lord's people will do well to take heed to their ways, that they sin not with their tongue. Satan and his angels are seeking to subvert those who have given themselves to the Lord and to catch them in their words. So while we are in their presence we must be especially on guard, that they may not entrap us. As the Psalmist says, "I will keep my mouth with a bridle while the wicked [One] is before me."

An Important Lesson For All

Although our Lord declared that men should give account for every pernicious word, yet He referred to the thoughts behind the words. It was the attitude of heart that distressed Him. He knew the attitude of heart displayed by the Scribes and the Pharisees would bring injury upon them.

Amongst the Lord's people there is nothing more important than that they should learn to be very just. While it is right to be loving, kind, generous, yet **justice** is the very foundation of character. All love and kindness not based upon justice are neither satisfactory nor pleasing to the Lord. In dealing with others, a child of God will not think, What will my fellow-men let me take from them? but, What are the rights of others, and what would my Heavenly Father have me do?

It is very natural for one to recognize his own rights in any matter, but the fallen nature does not so quickly perceive the rights of others. Therefore one of the most important lessons for the Lord's people to learn is to do unto others as they would have others do unto them—simple justice.

We fear that many of the Lord's dear people have not fully realized that obedience to the rules which govern the New Nature means absolutely the "Golden Rule" on their part toward all others. They must not do to others what they would not have others do to them. It is the duty of the New Creature to bring the body into such subjection that justice shall rule in every act and word, and so far as possible in every thought. One must be just in his thoughts before he can properly be just in his dealings. Whoever thinks unjustly will act unjustly in spite of endeavors to the contrary.

The Treasure Stored in Our Hearts

As we reflect that the Church is standing before the Bar of Divine Judgment, under the personal inspection of our Lord, and that in His estimation our words are a criterion of judgment, we cannot weigh too carefully the underlying principles upon which His decision will be made. Our Lord's words, as recorded in Matthew 12:34-36, indicate that both the heart and the mouth are under special scrutiny. How necessary therefore is a right condition of heart, in order that the words of our mouth may be acceptable to our Lord and Redeemer!

In our Lord's statement, the heart is **representative** of the character, and the mouth is the **index** of that character. The word **heart** is sometimes used in Scripture with the force of the word **mind.** Out of the abundance of the mind the mouth speaks. A good man brings forth good things out of the treasure of his mind. But all mankind are by nature sinners; therefore all are by nature evil to some extent. God does not approve of any who are under the sentence of death. Nevertheless there are those of the condemned race of Adam who are relatively good—those who, despite the imperfections under which they were born, the blemishes of their fallen nature, are desirous of being in harmony with the One who is all-good.

We find nothing in Scripture to support the doctrine of total depravity—to imply that there is nothing whatever of good in humanity. Even though no one is perfect, nevertheless, there are some who have at least a good will, good intentions. Such superior characters of past Ages were represented in the Ancient Worthies—Abel, Enoch, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, the Prophets of Israel, etc., who fully demonstrated their obedience to God and their loyalty to the principles of righteousness.

The Class Approved of God

During this Gospel Age also there are some who are good. Amongst the heathen, as well as in Christian lands, there are those who are well-meaning, well-intentioned, those who are not malicious, not striving to do wrong, but endeavoring to do right. In order to have the Divine approval in this Age, however, one must be of those who come unto the Father through Jesus; for none others are accepted of God. The Father will not receive any one whose heart is not sincere, who does not have good intentions, who does not manifest loyalty to Him and to the principles of righteousness.

Therefore any whom we have reason to believe are accepted of God, begotten of the Holy Spirit, are no longer to be counted as "children of wrath, even as others," but as of the Household of Faith. Despite the frailties of their flesh, they are good at heart; else God would not accept them. With these there is a constant conflict between the New Will and the desires of the flesh.

When we come to consider those who are good at heart, we find that all of them have imperfect bodies—some more so than others. Shall we give up the struggle for the prize because we cannot do perfectly? No! The Lord assures us that He looks at the heart, not at the flesh; that He has made a very gracious arrangement through our Lord Jesus by which the imperfections are cleansed away. "The blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanseth us from all sin." Therefore all His children may come with courage to the Throne of Heavenly Grace, there to obtain mercy and help in every time of need.

Chips or Apples—Which?

The good things brought forth from the treasure of a good man's heart will be those things which he has stored up from time to time. As the Psalmist says of the godly man, "His delight is in the Law of the Lord; and in His Law doth he meditate day and night." And of himself he declares, "Mine eyes prevent [anticipate] the night watches, that I may meditate in Thy Word." Law, precepts—the spirit, the purpose of that Law, not merely the outward form. So should we meditate upon the spirit of the Law of God. The sentiment of our heart should be the desire to get the Divine Mind as nearly as possible on every subject. All who are eager to be in harmony with God and to attain His character-likeness will think upon things that are good, pure, holy.—Psalm 1:2; 119:148; Philippians 4:8.

As one thinks upon things that are good, the mind becomes stored with good. Wherever there is a mouth disposed to speak upon things that are evil, there is an evil disposition—a mind in which evil has been stored. Whatever one has stored up in the mind will be topmost and sure to be spoken. An evil treasure will show itself, despite all endeavors to hide it; and likewise a good treasure will manifest itself; for the mind can hold only a certain amount.—Luke 6:45.

A father saw his son reading a novel. He knew that his son was in the habit of reading along this line. Calling the boy, he said, "John, I wish you to empty the apples out of that basket, and then take the basket to the woodshed and fill it with chips." The son did as he was directed. When he returned the father said, "Now put in the apples." The son replied that he could not do this, because there was not room enough in the basket for both chips and apples. Then the father said, "That is just what you are about to do with your mind. You have been filling your mind with chips; and when you try to put in apples, there will be no room." Thus it is with all of us. If we fill our minds with jokes, foolish sayings, etc., we shall not be able to fill them with the things of the Holy Spirit.—Ephesians 5:1-7.

Many of the Lord's people find that, while their hearts are good, there is in their flesh a tendency for certain things that are not good. Thus there is a continual struggle between the flesh and the spirit as to whether the treasure stored up shall be chips or apples, so to speak. It is for each New Creature to decide which shall fill his mind—what kind of society he will choose, where he will go, what he will read, what kind of influences he will come under, what kind he will resist, etc. If in the past he has to any extent treasured up evil things, he should now try to rid himself of them. If his mind has been filled with jokes and levity, things not proper to the child of God, he should seek to put these away.

How Character Is Built

Finally, there is a relationship between this laying up of a good treasure in our minds and that of which our Lord spoke when He said, "Lay up for yourselves treasure in Heaven." In laying up treasure in our minds and hearts, we are building character. Whoever goes into a man's house and sees what he has gathered in the way of treasures can easily perceive the direction in which that man's mind is bent. His preferences demonstrate his character. Thus it is with us all; the things which we cultivate are an index to our character.

When we come to render up our account as New Creatures, character will decide whether we shall be esteemed worthy to be of the Lord's elect Little Flock. Only those who have laid up the treasure of a character like that of the Lord Jesus Christ, our Pattern, will be fit for an inheritance in the Kingdom of Heaven. Our eternal destiny therefore will be decided by the way in which we now use our minds and the thoughts which we now accumulate. Whoever cultivates good thoughts will receive a blessing, not only in the present life, but throughout the future.

Our first concern, then, must be for the heart—that its affections and dispositions may be wholly under the control of Grace Divine; that every principle of truth and righteousness may be enthroned there; that justice, mercy, benevolence, meekness, self-control, faith, brotherly-kindness, love, supreme reverence for God and for Christ, and a fervent love for all the beauties of holiness, may be firmly fixed as the governing principles of life. If these principles are established in the heart, we shall have no difficulty in controlling our tongue; for out of the good treasure of our heart the mouth will speak forth words of truth, soberness, wisdom and grace. —Z. '14:245-247.

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It is the common thought with those who are in most danger, that they cannot fall, that they are secure, just as some of the transgressors, boasted that they were God's holy people, saying, "All the congregation are holy, every one of them, and the Lord is among them." (Num. 16:3.) Boastfulness is not a sign of piety, but rather the reverse. Meekness and humility, a realization of our own littleness and of the Lord's greatness, is the most favorable condition for those who would keep faithfully on the pilgrim way and reach the Canaan of promise. Thus the Apostle stated it respecting himself, saying, "When I am weak, then I am strong." It is when we realize our own weakness that we realize also our dependence upon the Lord and are willing to be guided of him in his way.—Z. '98:135, 136.

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True, faith without works would be dead, and we are to show our faith by our works; but we are not to be judged by the imperfect works which are the utmost of our ability, but to be judged by our faith, which is reckoned unto us for righteousness—as full perfection: for, "The righteousness of the law (of God's demands) is (reckonedly) fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit."—Romans 8:4; Z. '98:142.

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It is these enemies in our own flesh which cause us the greatest difficulties. It is these that Satan appeals to: these he seeks to encourage in their warfare against the new spirit of our minds; it is through these that the spirit of the world gains closest approach to us, and seeks to capture us, and lead us back as slaves of Sin. So to speak, the "new creature in Christ" is beset, surrounded on every hand with enemies, seeking our disaster and re-enslavement. We must battle—battle for ourselves, battle for our own liberty, battle for victory over our own weaknesses, battle against the spirit of the world, battle against delusions and snares of the adversary, by which he would seek to make the evil things appear good, and right to appear undesirable. No wonder, then, that the Christian soldier is urged to be continually watchful; . . . no wonder that he is cautioned in respect to his various and wily foes, and especially against those of his own flesh. —Z. '98:154, 155.

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He who sustained Elijah can equally sustain us. The important question with each of us should be, Am I the Lord's servant, in the place and doing the work which he has directed? If so, our bread and our water shall be sure, and no good thing will he withhold from those who walk uprightly.—Isa. 33:16; Psa. 84:11; Z. '98:191.

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Love will not be forever noting the defects of the various members of the body of Christ, nor holding them up to ridicule and scorn of others; but each will be, so far as possible, fully as anxious to cover the defects of others as to cover his own defects; and to sympathize with others in their conflicts with their besetments, as he sympathizes with himself, and desires that the Lord shall sympathize with him, in his own conflict with his own imperfections. "If any man have not the spirit of Christ (the disposition of Christ, love) he is none of his." —Rom. 8:9; Z. '98:201.

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FIGHTING THE GOOD FIGHT OF FAITH

Question.—What is the connection between the first and the latter part of this text, "Be of good cheer; I have overcome the world"?

Answer.—We have before us a very remarkable proposition in the Lord's call. We are called to be children of God, sons of the Highest, joint-heirs with Christ, his Son, in the Kingdom work. Instead of this bringing us great honor among men in the present life, it brings the very reverse—persecution, tribulation. God's people have persecution because they have consecrated their lives to him. The tribulation would naturally lead them to disappointment and to feel that God's favor is not with them.

Hence it is quite necessary for them to have some such encouragement as the words of our text, as though the Lord had said, Do not allow these tribulations to make you discouraged; remember that I am the Captain of your salvation; remember that I have gone before you; remember my degradation before obtaining a share in this Kingdom; remember that although entirely without sin I endured great contradiction of sinners against myself. These things should be an assurance to you of the greatness of the coming Kingdom; that the glories far outweigh any sacrifices you may endure. Furthermore, in every trial and difficulty you may have my succor. In every tribulation I will provide a way of escape. Fight a good fight. Think of the joys and honors and privileges which will be yours if you are faithful to the end. "We shall be kings and priests unto God and reign with Christ a thousand years."—Z. '11:46, 47.

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The anointing which comes upon the Lord's people must affect their outward conduct by manifestations of greater meekness, patience, brotherly-kindness, affection and generosity of word and deed. —Z. '14:37.

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"SONGS IN THE NIGHT HE GIVETH"

While the whole creation groans under its load of sin and sorrow, the saintly few may sing, may rejoice, even in the midst of all the sorrows of life, and even though they share the results of sin as fully or even more fully than do others. The secret of their joy is two-fold: (1) They have experienced reconciliation to God. (2) They have submitted their wills to His will. They obtained this new relationship by the way of faith in the Redeemer—faith in His Blood of Atonement. They entered by the "strait gate" and "narrow way" of consecration to God—surrendering their own wills and covenanting to do the Divine will to the best of their ability.

This submission of the will to God and the realization that all their life's affairs are in God's keeping and under His supervision gives rest to the heart. They have a rest and peace in this surrendered condition which they never knew when they sought to gratify self-will and ignored the right of their Creator to the homage of their hearts and the obedience of their lives.—Z. '11:381.

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Each should remember that brotherly love is one of the tests of character.—Z. '13:141.

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The Scriptures indicate that the Gentile governments will receive from their own peoples their first notice that their lease of power has expired.—Z. '14:260.

Old Corn Gems

NUMBER SIXTY-TWO

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"In My Name"

There were only two or three of us
  Who came to the place of prayer—
Came in the teeth of a driving storm:
  But for that we did not care,
Since after our hymns of praise had risen,
  And our earnest prayers were said,
The Master Himself was present there
  And gave us the living bread.

We noted his look in each other's face,
  So loving, and glad, and free:
We felt his touch when our heads were bowed,
  We heard his "Come to Me!"

Nobody saw him lift the latch,
  And none unbarred the door;
But "Peace" was his token in every heart,
  And how could we ask for more?

It was only a handful gathered in
  To that little place of prayer.
Outside were struggle and strife and sin,
  But the Lord himself was there.
He came to redeem the pledge he gave—
  Wherever his loved ones be,
To give his comfort and joy to them,
  Though they count but two or three.

—Z. '94:154.

Mind and Will

IN The Watch Tower for April 15th there occurs a statement which seems to call for an explanation. On Page 117, lines 11 and 12, we read: "The will of the body was reckoned entirely dead before the individual could be counted a New Creature." While it is true that the words **mind** and **will** are often used interchangeably, nevertheless, it has been our custom to differentiate between these; but in the above sentence this was neglected.

The will of the flesh dies **actually**; and we receive a new will, a holy will, the will of God, instead of our own will. If that will should ever cease to be holy, and turn again to be a fleshly will, that would be what the Apostle terms, "drawing back unto perdition." St. Peter says that such a change of will would correspond to a sow returning to her wallowing in the mire, after she had been washed. Those who turn wilfully and deliberately back to the will of the flesh are described as "twice dead and plucked up by the roots." In other words: This would mean that, the fleshly **will** having revived, the spirit-begotten **new will** had died.

But with the **mind** it is different. The **mind** is a part of the body. The body has its fleshly appetites, preferences, propensities, and is continually clamoring for the earthly rights against the decision of the **new will.** The fleshly **mind,** therefore, is not dead; else it could not clamor and war against the spirit of the new will, the New Creature in Christ Jesus. —Galatians 5:17.

Such clear-cut distinctions are to be found only in the Bible, and probably will not be appreciated by any but close Bible students. What we would better, therefore, have said is, "The **mind** of the flesh is **reckoned** dead, before the individual can be counted a new Creature."

This is in line with the Apostle's statement, "Reckon ye yourselves dead indeed to sin, but alive unto God." Again we read, "Mortify [deaden] your members which are on the earth"—your fleshly mind. This mortifying, or deadening, of the fleshly mind means a continuous struggle on the part of the new will against the old creature reckoned dead, but not actually dead.—Z. '14:190.

CONVENTIONS

The Yakima Ecclesia will hold a local Convention on Saturday and Sunday, August 6th and 7th, at which all Standfast Brethren will be welcome. Brothers Heard and Palmer will serve. For further information apply to Sister J. L. Clearwater, 809 N. Third St., Yakima, Wash.

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GENERAL CONVENTION

The next General Convention will be held at Vancouver on September 3rd, 4th and 5th, 1921. Further announcement will be made in the next issue of the Old Corn Gems.

We do believe that those who are true branches in the "true Vine" should **know** of this union with Christ, and should be able to "glory in the Lord," with a "full assurance of faith," "nothing doubting;" realizing that "he who hath begun a good work (in them) is able to complete it." . . .

"How firm a foundation, ye saints of the Lord,
Is laid for your faith in his excellent Word!
What more can he say than to you he hath said?
You, who unto Jesus for refuge have fled."

—Z. '96:36.

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OLD CORN GEMS

NUMBER SIXTY-TWO

"And they did eat of the OLD CORN of the land on the morrow after the Passover . . . and the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the OLD CORN of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year." Joshua 5:11-12.

A SAFE RULE

"WHERE A BROTHER GIVES AN INTERPRETATION OF A SCRIPTURE WHICH DIFFERS FROM THAT GIVEN BY BROTHER RUSSELL, AND BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION SEEMS REASONABLE AND IN HARMONY WITH THE PLAN OF GOD, THEN WE BELIEVE IT A SAFE RULE TO FOLLOW BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION, FOR THE REASON THAT HE IS THE SERVANT OF THE CHURCH, SO CONSTITUTED BY THE LORD FOR THE LAODICEAN PERIOD; AND THEREFORE WE SHOULD EXPECT THE LORD TO TEACH US THROUGH HIM. WHERE THERE ARISES A DOUBT IN THE MIND AS TO WHICH INTERPRETATION IS CORRECT, THEN IT IS ALWAYS SAFER TO RESOLVE THAT DOUBT IN FAVOR OF BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION. WE BELIEVE SUCH TO BE IN HARMONY WITH THE LORD'S WILL." Z. '18:51.

The Kindness, Humility and Patience of Love

"God is Love."—1 John 4:8.

IN THE SCRIPTURES the word love is used to express the complete whole of the grand and glorious qualities which make up the perfection of Jehovah. God is the personification of Love. To whatever extent any one possesses this quality of Love to that extent he has character-likeness to God. Whoever is fully in God's likeness may be said to be Love; for Love is the great principle which represents most fully the Divine character.

"God is Love," our Lord Jesus is Love; and when the Church is perfect, each member of the Body will also be Love. This great principle will have full control of all that we do and say, even as now it has control in the hearts of the Lord's people, despite the weaknesses of the flesh, which prevent its full expression. When all the imperfection is taken away, those who attain the prize of our glorious high calling will have the image of God, the image of the Lord. The hope of attaining the likeness of the Divine character is the great ambition which inspires us to faithfulness of endeavor.

Incidentally, it may be remarked that faith, hope and love are fruits of the Holy Spirit. Although every good and perfect gift comes from the Father (James 1:17), nevertheless, there is a difference between a "gift" and a "fruit." Possession of a gift may be acquired immediately, but a fruit requires time in which to develop. So with the fruits of the Holy Spirit.

Here we see displayed the Wisdom of God. Development is a gradual work. With those who have that earnest desire and determined zeal for righteousness which God wishes them to have, every word and every act has something to do with the development of this quality of Love. Our Heavenly Father does not expect us to acquire perfection of love in the flesh, for its weaknesses and imperfections will not permit us to do so; but He expects to find in those who will be members of the Body of Christ that earnestness of spirit and faithful endeavor which demonstrate that if they had perfect bodies they would always manifest love.

In order to reach this degree of development of character, we must not live after the flesh, the old creature, but must train our minds to desire only those things which are true, pure, loving and good. In this sense of the word we are to be copies of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Kindness Not Always Love

The followers of Christ have consecrated their own wills and have been begotten of the Holy Spirit, which is the Spirit of Love; for it is the Spirit of God, who is Love. Therefore their sentiment toward one another must be one of loving interest. Perhaps they are not always wise in knowing how to exercise loving-kindness; sometimes their fallen nature may lead them to think that a certain course of action would be the loving one, when it is the very reverse—the wrong course. Hence we need to be on the alert to perceive to what extent we are using the spirit of a sound mind in our conduct and in our dealings with one another.

A person might manifest kindness in word and act without having the right motive. Sometimes kindness is prompted by motives other than love. It might be for selfish reasons, or for the purpose of entrapping another to his disadvantage. This form of fraud has become so common as to cause no particular comment.

The Christian's experience is a continual schooling. Daily we are learning more and more about ourselves and about the Wisdom and Justice of God. As we learn these lessons day by day, we are learning more what to reprobate and correct in ourselves. In thus discovering our own imperfections, we should learn, as a matter of course, not to expect perfection in others; and we should give them credit for doing their best to exemplify the highest ideals which they have in respect to the unity and perfection required for membership in the Body of Christ.

Love is always kind; Love cannot wilfully injure another. The parent who loves his child will not do anything to harm that child. He might sometimes make a mistake and punish the child unjustly, but the motive behind a loving parent's action will always be kind and true.

Love might sometimes be regarded as unkind, for the principles governing the actions of the individual might be misunderstood. When our Heavenly Father forbade Adam and Eve to partake of the fruit of the Tree of Knowledge, He had a wise reason for so doing. No doubt He would have eventually permitted them to partake of that fruit; but it was kindness on His part to keep them in ignorance of that fact. Thinking God to be unkind, ungenerous toward them, Eve thought to obtain her rights. So with us. If our Heavenly Father's kindness is not always understood, we may not be surprised if we have a similar experience. Although our spirit, or motive, may be right, yet we may not always have the ability to manifest it; and so we must make due allowance when others misunderstand us.

The Power of Indwelling Love

Man was originally made in the image of God (Gen. 1:26, 27); but by reason of the fall of Adam, his balance of mind has been destroyed. Those who have the mind, or will of Christ are able to overcome some of the inequalities of their natural disposition and to think soberly of their own knowledge and ignorance and of that of others. This ability to appreciate the true state of affairs is the secret of much of our blessing in the Lord.

When we see others who have a smaller appreciation of justice than we have and who do things contrary to the principles of righteousness, we rejoice that we know better and are able to do better than they. The spirit of a sound mind shows us that we have more ability along some lines than have some others, and that others have more ability along some lines than we. Because of the fall of man, all are weak in one direction or another. The knowledge of the imperfect condition of humanity should humble us rather than puff us up.

Humility of mind comes only after the attainment of considerable knowledge of Christ. Knowledge puffs up because of selfishness of heart, because we are more likely to be conscious of our own good qualities than of those of others. Hence those born with less selfishness have less to contend with, and those born with more of it have more to contend with; and in proportion as we have the Spirit of Christ, we are able to overcome the tendency to be puffed up with what little knowledge we possess. Indwelling love has the power to build up, to strengthen character, and to counteract the wrong effect of the fallen human nature.

Proper and Improper Causes of Provocation

The whole world has a tendency to recognize the principles of Justice. Even those whose conduct toward others is far from just, seem to crave an opportunity to fight against injustice, provided that the case is not one with which they are identified. This inclination often manifests itself in acts of violence, as when mobs vent their anger against some poor sinner who has done something to provoke their wrath. The least virulent amongst them have perhaps done wrong also, yet they seize the opportunity to show their indignation against wrongdoing and seem to take delight in punishing the offender.

The Lord's people should not possess this spirit of intolerance. We should have patience, sympathy and endurance when things go wrong, and should make due allowance for those who are transgressors. The more we possess of the spirit of patience, the more we have of the spirit of forbearance and the more difficult it is to arouse us to anger. Wherever the spirit of love prevails, its possessor is not easily moved to do or say anything unkind or unjust. Love makes us very patient with those with whom we are associated; it is anxious to throw the mantle of charity over everything that seems to be wrong.

Love would have us remember that while another may be in error, it does not follow that he is at fault. He may not have understood a matter correctly or his judgment may not have been the best, owing to inherited weakness over which he has no control. Before condemning any one we should make sure that he is at fault. Justice demands that we do no less than investigate before we condemn. Love urges us to be as merciful in the case as is possible.

God is the very personification of Love, yet the Scriptures tell us that He has been provoked at different times. While passing through the wilderness, the children of Israel aroused His indignation repeatedly. (Psa. 78:40, 56; 95:7-11.) The idolatrous tendencies of that nation brought Divine wrath upon them and sent them into captivity to Babylon. (Jer. 7:17-20.) Finally, their rejection and crucifixion of our Lord Jesus Christ brought upon them "wrath to the uttermost" and caused their dispersion into all parts of the earth.

Righteous Indignation a Proper Feeling

The Lord's people are not to be of that immovable kind that cannot feel any resentment of injustice. Lack of ability to have just indignation would imply lack of morals and of harmony with God. Of our Lord Jesus it is written that when He beheld the unrighteous condition of the rulers of His people, and saw the injustice of their conduct, He "looked round about on them with anger, being grieved for the hardness of their hearts." (Mark 3:5.) Like Him, we should be wholly out of sympathy with everything not in harmony with God.

We are to love righteousness and hate iniquity. This word iniquity, which means the very opposite of Love, is a strong expression. A person who is indifferent to matters of right and wrong is indifferent to the character of God, who is in opposition to all forms of iniquity. Of our Lord, the Scriptures say, "Thou lovest righteousness, and hatest wickedness; therefore God, Thy God, hath anointed Thee with the oil of gladness above Thy fellows." (Psa. 45:7.) All who are cultivating character pleasing to God, all who are endeavoring to become exact copies of His dear Son, should put away every impurity, everything not right. Whatever is wrong should always be opposed by our new minds.

On the other hand, if we have Love as the Lord has it, we shall hate the **wrong,** but not the **individual** who does wrong. In proportion as love controls our minds and hearts, we shall feel sympathy for those who are in iniquity, for we remember that the race of mankind are fallen from their original perfection. We should think that to do evil is not their intention, their will, but that they are suffering from an iniquitous disease. Love is patient and tries to find extenuating circumstances and conditions. It seeks to help the evil-doer and is not easily provoked to anger.

But the word "provoke" signifies **to incite to;** in another place the Apostle says, "Provoke one another to Love and good works." (Heb. 10:24.) Love should say and do those things that will incite to loving words rather than stir up bitterness, which leads to anger, wrath, malice, strife and evil-speaking." (Eph. 4:31, 32.) In other words, it is much better to be a peacemaker than a strife-maker. Yet we are not to have **peace at any price;** rather we should have peace, if possible, where **principle** is not involved. We should stir up strife only where some good is sure to result.

The degree of love, the strength of love, may be determined by the ease with which it may be swerved and aroused to opposition or to impatience and anger. We have already seen that there may be times when patience might stand in the way of the real interests of the case and where Love would take steps to correct what seemed to be an apparent evil; but we must remember that balance of mind, or judgment, is not ours by nature. **Perfection of decision** is a quality belonging only to our Heavenly Father and our Lord Jesus Christ.

"Let patience have her perfect work." (James 1:4.) The Father would not be provoked to anger with anything trivial. With us, however, our balance of judgment is so poor that generally we are too hasty. Very few of us take in the full circumstances surrounding ourselves and those with whom we have to do; therefore growth in grace and growth in knowledge will have to do with the degree of love exhibited by each one.

Generosity and Sympathy To Be Cultivated

We are in the School of Christ, the Great Teacher. We have the words of the Heavenly Father, of our Lord Jesus and of the Apostles recorded in the Bible; therefore we should know the difference between right and wrong. On the other hand, we see that sin exists in the world. Mankind are imperfect in mind and morals. This condition is hereditary—the result of Adam's transgression, more than six thousand years ago. Yet with all our advantages of knowledge, we "**cannot** do the things that we would"; consequently, we feel a measure of sympathy for **ourselves,** and we should extend the same measure to others. Indeed, we should be more critical of ourselves than of others, although the Lord's Word says that we are not to judge either ourselves or others. We cannot read the hearts of those around us and therefore are not competent to decide what motives prompt their actions nor what degree of punishment should be meted out to them.

Nevertheless, we are to observe right and wrong conduct among our neighbors. We may know that they have, figuratively speaking, a bad tree and therefore bring forth bad fruit; and we should consider **why** they have a tree that produces such fruitage. Perhaps they were less favorably born than we. Perhaps they have never been in the School of Christ and have never heard the Great Teacher or the Apostles. If so, our sympathy should go out to them and our attitude of mind toward them should be such that we will not be provoked by their shortcomings, but should manifest generosity of heart toward them.

To attain this sympathy and generosity is a part of our instruction in the School of Christ, but we do not learn all pertaining to the subject in a day or a week. We get "here a little, there a little" (Isa. 28:10); and if we are following on to know the Lord, our mental discernment will become clearer and our minds will broaden in sympathy for others. Thus we shall become more like our Father in Heaven, for He is kind to the unthankful and just to the unjust, as our Lord pointed out.—Matt. 5:44-48.

Pride a Cause of Much Irritability

Undoubtedly the causes for irritability and for being provoked vary in different persons. With some, it is because of a nervous condition of health, which renders them less easily able to control themselves according to the standards which they themselves recognize. With others, the cause of irritability is **pride.** In fact, pride is connected with nearly everything that is injurious to the people of God. Wherever pride exists, the person is susceptible to evil influences from every quarter.

Pride manifests itself in various ways. Sometimes it exhibits itself as **self-esteem,** leading one to think too highly of himself and too lightly of others, even to the extent of imagining himself to be their superior. At other times, pride manifests itself as **approbativeness:** anything that conflicts with the **desire to appear well before others** touches a tender spot.

We are not to be indifferent to these things. If we have pride or approbativeness, we are to seek to control **it** with the spirit of love and sympathy for others, instead of letting the wrong spirit control **us.** The best way to do this is to practise generosity and to provoke others to love and good works instead of to anger. Let us remember that **humility** is one of the great lessons to be learned in the School of Christ; obedience to the instructions of the Teacher along this line has very much to do with our ever getting into the Kingdom.

One of the best aids to the learning of this important lesson is to learn to judge ourselves—to scrutinize our own motives. If we find that we have acted unjustly toward another, we should go and make amends to the best of our ability; we should properly scourge our own minds, and seek to make matters right with the one we have wronged. For a person who is proud or who is sensitive to the good opinion of others, it is very difficult to apologize; but the best thing to do is to set the matter right as speedily as possible, and repeatedly, if necessary. Thus we may have help along the line where we should have it, by overcoming our pride and vanity.

The members of the Body of Christ are all to be copies of God's dear Son. This does not mean that God's dear people will be able always to control their looks and actions and words, but that the heart must recognize this standard and strive to attain to it. Every time a person who has some weakness along this line of pride or vanity will apologize for a wrong done he will by that act show both God and man that his heart recognizes the right principle. A great blessing will come to him because of his following very strictly the Divine Word; thus he will gradually overcome his weakness and strengthen his character.—Z. '12: 337-339.

"Are They Not All Ministering Spirits"

2 Kings 6: 8-18.

> "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them."—Psa. 34:7.

THE SPECIAL feature of this Scripture lesson is that there are invisible powers on every hand for the protection and assistance of the Lord's people, while doing his work. As we have already shown, there are "wicked spirits," invisible to humanity, whose fiendish delight is to deceive, mislead and ensnare mankind. But in this lesson we have the other side of the question presented to our attention. It is an encouragement to know that, though beset by evil spirits, the Lord's people are surrounded by other invisible agents no less powerful, whose interest in their welfare is of the highest order, and who are near to guard us in proportion as our hearts are pure, and loyal to the Lord and his Word.

Though we do not understand the process, we accept the fact, that God has both spoken and written and operated miraculously through holy men of old. We have illustrations of this in Elijah and Elisha. But how these communications were made to the prophets we are not informed. Quite possibly they were made through the invisible spirit beings who serve the Lord and his people. Concerning these invisible spirit beings, angels, the Apostle says, "Are they not all ministering [serving] spirits, sent forth to minister unto those who shall be heirs of salvation?" It may be that they ministered to Elijah and Elisha the information which they possessed, and which therefore constituted them prophets. For instance, in this lesson, we are informed that Elisha sent word in advance to the king of Israel respecting the movements and intentions of the king of Syria, and that his fame as a seer had extended to Syria; so that the counsellors of Syria's king explained the matter to him, saying, "Elisha, the prophet that is in Israel, telleth the king of Israel the words that thou speakest secretly in thy bedchamber."

Is it unreasonable to suppose that it was these invisible ministering spirits which were the divine instrumentality in making known to Elisha the things proper to be told to the king of Israel for his protection? We think it not unlikely; we think it probable. In one of our previous lessons we saw that, when the Shunammite woman came to Elisha to inquire about her son, Elisha said, "The Lord hath hid it from me, and hath not told me." (2 Kings 4:27.) From this it is evident that it was not by any power that the prophet himself possessed that he had any special knowledge, but by revelations from the Lord. And this agrees with the testimony of the Apostle Peter, who says, "Holy men of old spake as they were moved by the holy spirit." (2 Pet. 1:21.) Our suggestion is that the holy spirit of God communicated information to the prophets through the holy angels, the invisible spirit beings who encamp round about them that fear God . But for God to use this instrumentality in communication would make it no less his power, just as he may use the lightning or the storm to do his work, and it be none the less his work; just as we may speak by telephone or telegraph or cable, and it be as really our word and deed as though done without those agencies of communication.

The folly of humanity attempting to cope with the spiritual powers is well illustrated in this lesson by the conduct of the king of Syria in sending an armed company to capture Elisha. He might well have reasoned that if the prophet had information of his most secret plans respecting the king of Israel, he would none the less have information respecting the proposed capture of himself. But the king of Syria and some of his people were to be taught a lesson respecting the power of the God of Israel, and of any man whom the God of Israel might choose to use as his channel or mouthpiece. Here, the foolishness of man was made to show forth the wisdom and power of God.

Elisha's servant (not Gehazi, we may feel assured, but another more worthy), seeing the armed host surrounding the city, was in terror, but the Prophet, who likewise saw the armed host, also discerned another host, more powerful, more numerous; and he entreated the Lord on behalf of his servant that he might have an opening of the eyes, to see that all the mountains round about them were filled with spirit beings—"horses and chariots of fire," or like fire, as all spirit beings are described in Scripture. (See Ezek. 1:13, 14; Dan. 7:9; Rev. 4:3-5.) The Lord answered the prayer: and then the young man saw what Elisha had already told him, that "they that be with us are more than they that be with them."

It is important that every Christian should have the eyes of his understanding opened, that he may see by faith that which was shown to Elisha and his servant literally. During this Gospel age the Lord does not open our natural eyes to see the wonderful provisions he has made for us, and his power for our protection; but instead **he gives us a still better knowledge of the subject through his Word of grace and truth,** so that we are enabled to walk by faith and not by sight; to see the armies of the Lord encamped around about us and to recognize their protection of us, without any miracle being performed upon our natural sight. None of us are sufficiently strong to pass through the fight of Christian warfare without just such assistances as these which the Lord has provided, and which faith beholds, accepts, lays hold of, rests upon and is strengthened by.

Shall we call this faith in invisible spiritual powers and agencies of God the **true spiritualism** of the Scriptures—in contradistinction to the **evil spiritualism** which is of Satan and his fellows, the fallen angels, the "wicked spirits in exalted positions?" We believe that this is so, and spiritualists admit that there are both good and evil spirits. They are sure that there are evil spirits, because they know how these have ensnared them in evil, enticed them into sin. They know that they are what the Scriptures term "lying spirits," because they have been lied to by the spirits which communicated with them; but they insist that there are good spirits, and they think that sometimes they have had communications with these. But this proposition we dispute: we hold that all the rapping, wonder doing and other manifestations of so-called spiritists are from the Evil One, and his consorts entirely.

A very small amount of common sense should convince anyone that the holy angels must have something better, higher, nobler, to do than are the various practices of these so-called spirits who speak through mediums and by obsession. Indeed, we hold that the good spirits, the holy angels, make no communications with man now: that these communications belonged to a previous time, when they were appropriate and necessary as the channels of divine communication. We do not need their ministry through mediums today, and are especially forbidden to seek communication or knowledge through such channels: this for the same reason that we do not need the testimony of the inspired seers and prophets today; because God has made an abundant provision for us through the prophetic utterances of the past, to the intent that we of the Gospel age should walk not by sight nor by communication with the angels, but by faith. We may realize no less clearly, but even more clearly, than did the ancients that he who is on our part is more than all they that be against us; we may discern by the eye of faith that the "angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them;" we may realize that all the powers of heaven—"more than twelve legions of angels"—although invisible to us, are nevertheless present, and fully subservient to every will of our glorious Lord; and that thus surrounded and protected we are living "under the shadow of the Almighty" and, as it were, in the hollow of his hand.

In this connection we are reminded of our Lord's words respecting his faithful disciples, his "little ones." He assures us that the very humblest of those who are his have high connections with the heavenly throne, saying, "Their angels do always behold the face of my Father in heaven." (Matt. 18:10.) That is to say, as the angels are all "ministering spirits sent forth to minister for those who shall be heirs of salvation" (the Gospel Church), there are some of them who have a charge, a watch, a care over each member of the body of Christ. Perhaps one guardian angel to each saint, perhaps more than one; but we have the Lord's assurance that his provision is "sufficient." One thought that our Lord's words give to us is, that these holy angels, charged with ministering to and caring for the elect, are in no danger of being detained so that they must wait for a long time on more important business before having access to the Father: on the contrary, they always have access to him, they can always see his face; and through the Redeemer, and by these agencies, God is ever ready to respond to our cries and to cause all things to work together for good to them that love him.

Turning to the host of Syria, the prophet prayed to the Lord that they might be smitten with blindness, our Common Version says; but from the original text the thought would appear to be not the loss of sight, but a bewilderment or hallucination, somewhat similar to that produced by hypnotism; when a person sees or imagines that he sees things differently from what they actually are. Exercising this power upon the host, Elisha guided them to the city of Samaria, saying, "This is not the way, neither is this the city; follow me, I will bring you to the man whom ye seek." And this was true, for Dothan was not Elisha's city, his home was in Samaria, and thither he took them; and he did indeed bring them to the man they sought, namely, himself; but not after the manner that they had expected. The narrative proceeds to say that when he had led them into the city of Samaria (under the influence of some power like hypnotism), he then said, "Lord, open the eyes of these men, that they may see," and then they understood where they were. They were completely in the hands of their enemies; surrounded by the king of Israel and his soldiers.

The king of Israel inquired whether or not he should smite them with the sword? Such an inquiry seems to indicate a considerable change of the kingly attitude toward the Lord and his representative: the reformation work was taking effect: Israel's kings were learning gradually that the will of the Lord was to be considered, and that to neglect his counsel would be unwise indeed. Elisha, in his reply, shows a large and benevolent heart, in full accord with the highest teachings of the New Testament. He showed the king that these men should not be put to death; but that instead a better way would be to return good for the intended evil. Accordingly, the king made a great feast and entertained his enemies and sent them home. We cannot doubt that they marveled at their peculiar experiences, and the happy outcome of what seemed for the moment so great a disaster. We may suppose, too, that they had a higher degree of respect for the Lord and his prophets and the king upon the throne of Israel, than they ever before had.

There is a lesson in this for us also: the best victories are the bloodless ones; the ones in which the spirit of righteousness and mercy and benevolence gains the victory over the spirit of rivalry, ambition and selfishness. This, under the Grace Covenant, among the soldiers of the cross is known as fighting the good fight and overcoming evil with good. It may not succeed in fullest measure in the present time, but nevertheless it will develop in ourselves the peaceable fruits of righteousness, and prepare us for a share in the strong government of the future, which with one hand will restrain the wicked and all the powers of evil, while with the other hand it blesses, washes, refreshes and anoints with the oil of gladness and blessing all the willing and obedient of the entire groaning creation.—Z. '98:238-240.

"Woe Unto Them That Are at Ease in Zion"

Amos. 6:1-8.

"They also have erred through wine, and through strong drink are out of the way."—Isa. 28:7.

THE THOUGHT of those who arranged the International Sunday School Lessons evidently was to make of this one a temperance lesson. Undoubtedly there was need for the inculcation of temperance, moderation, self-denial, self-restraint, in the days of Amos, as there is today, and as there will be so long as mankind is under the influence of depraved appetites, and weak through heredity, and exposed to temptations through association with others likewise depraved;—especially while the great adversary, Satan, is still at liberty, unbound, permitted to ensnare the depraved by putting darkness for light, and evil for good. We remember that temperance, self-control, is one of the fruits of the spirit of Christ, and as such it should be sought and cultivated by all who desire to be copies of God's dear Son. But it is a too frequent mistake to think of temperance merely as respects intoxicating liquors: the Christian may reasonably be supposed to have gotten such a victory over self, to have gained such self-control, that he will no longer be in danger as respects drunkenness, but he finds, nevertheless, a great necessity for the exercise of self-control, temperance, in respect to all the affairs of life—in matters which previously gave him no concern, respecting which he saw no necessity for self-control.

Temperance, self-control, in the Christian, is applicable to all the affairs of life; he is to be temperate in his language, not given to exaggeration or misrepresentation, better or worse than the facts; his yea is to be yea, and his nay, nay. He is to speak forth "words of soberness," and even if it be necessary to speak in correction or reproof, he is to be temperate, making sure that he speaks the truth in love, and not in severity or bitterness. His speech is to be with grace—seasoned with the saltness, the preservative quality, of his consecration to Christ,—for is he not a part of the "salt of the earth?"

The Christian's **temperance** is to extend to his business. He is to be moderate in his aims and ambitions, in his money-getting and money-saving. He is to remember that under the Lord's call the riches which he seeks for are heavenly and not earthly, and that the Master says, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom." Christian moderation, then, will seek first the Kingdom of heaven, esteeming that its attainment would be great riches, and cheaply bought, even at the cost of earthly welfare, riches and comforts.

The Christian should be temperate in his food—his eating, as well as his drinking. As he has consecrated himself and all that he has to the Lord, is it not, therefore, a part of his bounden duty to obtain from life the largest possible yield to the Lord's glory? Must he not, therefore, consider what and how much he shall eat, to the intent that he may render to the Lord his largest, his best, service? This will mean self-denial, self-control, for the appetite of food, as well as the appetite of drink, is considerably depraved in all. True, gluttony will not rob one of his senses, and make him crazy, as will spiritous liquors, yet over-eating does frequently, to a considerable extent, sap the energies of the mind, or by over-stimulation weakens them. Thus many are weak and sickly through self-gratification in the matter of food as well as drink. Temperance, self-control, is the command of the Lord to all such:—not that it will benefit the Lord, but that thus we may build up proper characters,—loyal to that which is right, good, reasonable, proper.

The Christian should be **temperate** in his joys. He should not set his chief affections upon the earth, or earthly things—pleasure, wealth, influence, popularity, etc. He is to remember that very much of the present order of things is wholly contrary to righteousness, and he is to seek to use even approved things of this world temperately, utterly rejecting those things which are contrary to righteousness, truth, goodness, purity: he is to find his pleasure in another quarter—in serving righteousness—in the service of the Lord, in the Word of the Lord, in the promises of the Lord, in the spirit of the Lord.

The Christian is to be **temperate** in his sorrows. He "sorrows not as others who have no hope," but he believes that Jesus died for the sins of the whole world, that he rose again in order to justification of those who believe and obey him, and that either now or in the age to come all mankind shall have a full opportunity to know of divine grace, and to accept and share therein, under the terms of the Covenant. Thus may the Christian, living up to his privileges under divine grace, be temperate in his sorrows:—

"He'll bear unmoved the world's dread frown,
Nor heed its scornful smile;
Him seas of trouble cannot drown,
Nor Satan's arts beguile."

This quality of temperance, once attained, will manifest itself also in kindness, and in patience. The Christian who has developed in self-control is the one who will be the most patient with the unwilling, unintentional faults and frailties of others: he will be ready to restore the repentant ones, remembering himself also, lest he should be tempted. The Apostle has reference to this temperance in all things, when he says, "Let your moderation be known unto all men." The cultivation of this moderation from the right standpoint of desire to be pleasing to the Lord, and in full harmony with him, leads to kindness, sympathy: for, finding how many are his own weaknesses, besetments, difficulties and desires, such an one can have a larger measure of sympathy with the entire "groaning creation." As a result, this temperance will work kindness of speech and of look and of act, inspired by the kindness of heart.

There is need for this temperance, moderation, self-control, and its accompanying spirit of kindness and gentleness everywhere: in the shop, in the store, in the schoolroom, in traveling, in visiting, at home with the various members of the family,—and above all, in the Church, the household of faith, the family of God. It will help us in cultivating this Christian temperance in all things to remember that we are the representatives of God and of our Lord Jesus Christ in the world. We are his ambassadors, and as such our lives of temperance and godliness, or of intemperance and ungodliness, are living epistles, known and read of all men with whom we come in contact. It is a part of our bounden duty, day by day, to see to it that not only the thoughts of our hearts, but also the words of our lips and all the acts of life are acceptable in the Lord's sight, and showing forth the praises of him who called us out of darkness into his marvelous light. . . .

—Z. '98:250, 251.

"Be Content with Such Things as Ye Have"

"Be content with such things as ye have; for he hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee. So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me."—Heb. 13:5, 6.

BAD ADVICE, very bad advice, says Mr. Worldlywiseman; it is because this advice has **not** been followed that we of America have made such progress within the past century. It is because the workmen of the United States are ambitious, energetic, and **not content** with such things as they have, but constantly trying to make two blades of grass grow, where one grew before, and to put ten dollars in the bank to one that was there before, that our nation has stepped rapidly to the front, and become noted for the genius, thrift and progressiveness of its people.

We will not dispute Mr. Worldlywiseman's statement, except to say that all of the remarkable progress of the present century is not due alone to discontent: much of it is due to freedom, which has come chiefly as the result of greater enlightenment, —an enlightenment which has come largely as a result of having the Bible in the living languages of the people and in their possession. Another element contributing to the marvelous developments of this century is one of which few take note; namely, that since 1799 we have been in the period known in the Scripture, as "the day of his preparation:" the period in which the Lord has been lifting the vail, and letting in upon the world, through natural channels, a stream of inventive genius designed to bring forward to perfection (through chemistry and mechanics and art) the devices and contrivances which will ere long most marvelously, under the guiding control of Immanuel, during the Millennium, make of this earth a Paradise. Nevertheless, we are willing to concede that ambition and discontent are present, and that they are helping in their way to bring forward the various devices which shall ultimately prove so great a blessing to mankind; but on the other hand, we contend that just in proportion as discontent is spread, in that proportion unhappiness is present, and an anarchistic spirit begotten. . . .

Few Are Appreciative—Few Value the Things That They Have

Evidently only the smaller number of those who have named the name of Christ, and who have made consecration of life and time and influence and all things to him, have ever appreciated these matters in their true light; and hence, not only are the so-called Christian nations the most discontented peoples of the world, but professed Christians are often among the most discontented and unhappy of individuals. Nay more, even some of those who have made the full consecration to the Lord, and some who have come to a considerable knowledge of present truth and respecting the wonderful time in which we are living, and the high calling and its object, and the glories to follow the sufferings of this present time,—many of these also, we fear, are among the discontented of the world,—unhappy, restless, not enjoying the **rest** which God provides for his people, not having "the peace of God which passeth all understanding" to rule in their hearts and keep all other affairs of life in subjection and in order.

Brethren, these things ought not so to be. See to it that they do not so continue. Remember that according to our covenant we sacrificed all of our earthly interests and rights, that we might become sharers with our Master in the divine nature and all the heavenly promises. Remember that the only things of an earthly kind promised us by the Lord are that we shall have the things **needful**. If we learn aright the lessons of necessity, we will find that the things needful for our sustenance might mean a bill of fare of very limited variety and of very inexpensive food; and it might mean a wardrobe of great simplicity and of very little cost; and it might mean a home of very humble appearance and very small and very scantily furnished. Whatever we have more than necessity is that much more than the Lord has promised to us in this present time; and is a cause for thankfulness of lip, and gratitude of heart.

With these things rightly viewed, where is the occasion or the desire to murmur or complain about such things as we have? Where would be the desire to wish for, hope for, or ask for more than the Lord has promised to give us, and more than his unerring wisdom has seen would be best for us? If these lessons from the Lord's Word are received into the good soil of honest hearts, they will speedily bring forth, under the sunshine of the divine favor and the droppings of divine grace, a hundredfold more of joy and peace and trust and contentment and happiness and love, in the lives of all who put them into exercise; and the influence upon our families, neighbors and associates will be a good influence, for their happiness as well as our own.

Instead of complaining about the weather, that it is too hot or too cold, too wet or too dry, too bright or too dark, or that it is too foggy or cloudy or murky, or something, let us be content with such weather as we have. We did not make it and we cannot change it. And since our wise and loving heavenly Father sees best to permit it so now, we see it best to have it so now. In his own good time his favor shall reach not only the world of mankind, to lift up and bless and heal it, but will reach also the home of mankind, the earth, to bring it into the Paradisaic condition which he has promised it shall have in the "times of restitution of all things."

If your health is not the best, do not go mourning and complaining all your days; be thankful—thankful that it is not worse, remembering that as a member of the fallen race the full penalty of sin against you is pain and suffering unto death. Whatever therefore you have, that is moderate or endurable or in some measure enjoyable, be very thankful, very grateful, and make the most of it.

Our text, then, is not only a good medicine to bring us spiritual health and joy in the Lord, but also very profitable to our physical health; for it is unquestionably a fact that the majority of people aggravate their physical complaints and diseases by their fretfulness and unhappiness of mind. If you are one of the Lord's children, remember the words of our Redeemer, Master and Forerunner in the narrow way, to the effect that the Gentiles (those who know not God, who are not his covenant people) seek continually after what they shall eat, what they shall drink, and wherewithal they shall be clothed, and that we should not be like unto them, because our Heavenly Father knoweth what things we have need of, before we ask him; and he has already promised, that we shall have **what is best for us.**

If your position in life is a lowly one, and requires continual labor to secure the things needful, do not complain, but, on the contrary, render thanks—thanks for the health and strength to perform the needed labor; thanks for the realization that the present brief life is only the schooling time, and that the lessons of the present, rightly learned, will bring riches of grace and glory which the world could neither give nor take away. Think then, on the other hand, of the fact that your condition is in some respects more favorable than that of some others who seem to be more prosperous or better situated; how many who have had wealth and leisure have found in them a curse! How many who have not been cursed by wealth have found that the deceitfulness of riches and the pride they are apt to induce are hindrances instead of helps in the "narrow way;" how many have found the meaning of the Lord's words, "How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the Kingdom of God."

Remember also the words of the Apostle, that not many rich, not many great, not many learned, are amongst God's chosen; that chiefly the poor of this world, rich in faith, shall be heirs of the Kingdom. Realizing that riches of faith, riches of trust, riches of contentment, and riches of godliness, with the fruits of the spirit which accompany these constitute the true riches, give thanks to the Lord that in his wisdom and grace he has so favorably situated you.

"Have Faith in God"—"Lord, Increase Our Faith"

The same principle holds good with reference to all of our affairs, no matter what. The lesson of **faith,** to those who have become the Lord's consecrated people, is not merely faith in doctrines and theories, nor, indeed, chiefly this faith. The chief feature of faith is confidence in God; that what he has promised he is able and willing to fulfil. This faith grasps not only the things to come, but also the things present; **this faith rejoices not only in the glory that shall be revealed, but rejoices also in the sufferings and trials and difficulties and all the rich experiences which an all-wise Father sees best to permit.** Let us therefore, as the Apostle exhorts, rejoice evermore, "in everything giving thanks."—1 Thess. 5:18; Eph. 5:20.

The best illustrations of this true faith, this **continuous confidence in God,** is found, as we should expect, in our dear Redeemer's experiences and their narrative. Realizing that he was in the world for the purpose of serving the divine plan, he realized also continually the supervision of divine wisdom in respect to all his affairs; consequently he not only went to the Father frequently in prayer, and went to the Word of the Lord for guidance, but every experience through which he passed, and all the opposition with which he met, he recognized as being under the divine supervision. He knew that he was fully consecrated to the Father, and seeking not his own will but the will of him that sent him; he knew consequently that the Father's providential care was superintending all the affairs of his life.

This is forcibly illustrated in his answer to Pilate; when the latter said to him, "Knowest thou not that I have power either to deliver thee or to put thee to death?" Jesus answered, "Thou couldest have no power, except it were given thee of my Father." Again he said, with respect to the cup of suffering and ignominy, "The cup which my Father hath given me, shall I not drink it?" Indeed, it was sufficient for him in any and every matter to realize that the Father was controlling: this thought gave him courage to do, to suffer and to bear.

And similar confidence in divine Providence is necessary to all who would come off conquerors through him who loved us and died for us. If we can feel sure that we have fully surrendered ourselves to God according to his call, we may also feel sure that all things are working for our good: we may realize in every emergency of life that the Father has prepared the cup, and will sustain and bless us while we drink it: our Lord Jesus, the Father's representative, oversees our trials and ignominy and suffering: he permits the cup to be prepared for us by blinded servants of Satan. This knowledge should not only enable us to take joyfully the spoiling of our goods (anything that we deemed precious, trade, influence, good name, etc.), but should enable us also to entreat with kindness and gentleness, and with a spirit of forgiveness those who prepare and administer the cup of our sufferings. But none can have this confidence of faith—none should have it—except one certain, particular class; and it is not a large class as compared to the world, but a "little flock"—those who have believed in the precious blood unto justification, and who have, as members of the body of Christ, consecrated themselves unreservedly to walk in their Redeemer's footsteps, to suffer with him, and to be finally glorified together with him.

"What Is Faith's Foundation Strong?"

In our text, after the Apostle has urged us to be "content with such things as ye have," he adds the reason or ground upon which this advice is given, saying, "For He hath said, I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." Yes: this is the true ground of contentment, the realization of the Lord's care, and that the Lord's wisdom and grace are being exercised towards us,—and that such things as he grants are the things which are best for us, and which we would choose for ourselves, if we had sufficient wisdom and insight into all the circumstances of the case.

The Apostle adds, "So then we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, I will not fear what man shall do unto me." The whole world has wondered at the intelligent courage of the humble ones of the Lord's people. The secret of their courage and of their strength is in their confidence that the Lord is their helper, that he, with wisdom and love which are infinite, is both able and willing to make all things work together for their good.

Possibly some may be inclined to wonder why so much attention has been given in these columns of late to themes similar to the one here discussed, and kindred topics calculated to develop more and more the spirit of love and the various fruits of that spirit, and to counteract the spirit of selfishness, and the evil fruits of that spirit. We answer, it is because we believe these lessons to be specially opportune at the present time. The Lord, by his grace, has removed many blinding errors from our minds, and given us clearer insight of his glorious plans, and revealed to us his glorious character in connection with his plan; and there has perhaps been more or less danger, that in such a study of theology the real object of all this knowledge, the object of the Gospel, may be lost sight of. It is not God's object to merely find an intellectual people, nor to instruct a people with reference to his plans, but to sanctify a people with the truth, and thus to make them "meet [fit] for the inheritance of the saints in light." We are of the opinion that the testings which the Lord designs for his people are **not merely doctrinal tests,** and consequently we expect, more and more, that the siftings and separations amongst those who come to a knowledge of the truth, will be considerably along the lines of character, and of the fruits of the spirit.

The Lord's final decision is not, If you be ignorant of certain things you are none of mine: nor, If you have certain knowledge you are mine: but, "If any man have not the spirit [disposition, mind] of Christ, he is none of his." And if we are right in this, dear readers, it is of paramount importance that we, as soldiers of the cross, put (keep) on not only the intellectual covering, the helmet of salvation, but also the heart covering, love of righteousness, and truth and goodness and purity, with the shield of faith. The breastplate of righteousness will be found to be one of the most important pieces of armor in the battle which is upon us, and respecting which we are told that thousands shall fall at our side.—Psa. 91:7; Matt. 24:24; 2 Thess. 2:11.

Not only so, but we believe that the lesson foregoing is of great importance, because the time is short: and those of the Lord's people who do not cultivate a spirit of contentment and thankfulness will not only not be fit for the Kingdom, but will as sharers of the world's spirit of discontent be in sore distress with the world very shortly, in the great time of trouble. Contentment and the faith which it implies, are necessary to godliness: and whoever is attempting godliness without striving for cultivation of contentment will surely make a failure of it. Godliness and the fruits of the spirit, meekness, patience, gentleness, longsuffering, brotherly-kindness, love, will not grow in the garden of the soul, where the weeds of discontent are permitted to sap the strength and vitiate the air with their noxious presence and influence.

The sentiment of one of our precious hymns is quite to the point, and we desire, for ourselves and for all of the Lord's people, that condition of faith and consecration and contentment which will permit us to sing from the heart, with the spirit and with the understanding also, the words:—

"Content with beholding his face,
  My all to his pleasure resigned,
No changes of season or place
  Can make any change in my mind."

"While blest with the sense of his love
  A palace a toy would appear,
And prisons would palaces prove,
  If Jesus still dwelt with me there."

Who can tell that the Lord may not ultimately put some such tests to us, as these mentioned by the poet which were applied to himself and to others of the faithful in the past? Let us remember that we will not be faithful in large things unless we have learned to be faithful in little things. Let each, therefore, faithfully continue a transformation of his life along these lines of godliness with contentment in the most trifling affairs of life. He will thus not only be making himself and others the happier in the present time, but he will be preparing himself for greater trials and tests that the Lord may be pleased to impose later, to prove to what extent we are overcomers of the world and of its spirit.

"This is the victory that overcometh the world, even your **faith**:" because faith lies at the foundation of all loyalty to God and his cause. Faith in the divine supervision of all our affairs not only gives peace and content, but it saps the root of all selfish ambitions and vain gloryings and boastings; because of our faith in the Lord's Word, that "He that humbleth himself shall be exalted and he that exalteth himself shall be abased." Faith in the Lord's supervision **prefers** the Lord's arrangement to any other as respects the sufferings of this present time and the glory that is to follow; and hence it doth not puff up but builds up in the character-likeness of our Redeemer.—Z. '98: 243-248.

"Blessed Are the Meek"

"The meek will He guide in judgment; and the meek will He teach His way."—Psalm 25:9.

EVEN a **perfect** man would need Divine guidance, in respect to his judgment of matters, in respect to his decisions, in respect to his course, in respect to his ways. And if a perfect man would need Divine guidance and oversight, in order to make no mistake from his limited degree of knowledge, because of not knowing fully the Father's will respecting him, much more would an **imperfect** man need this! The good and the bad, the wise and the foolish—all classes of mankind—need such instruction. But there is only one class now in the proper attitude of mind to receive it, and that class is Scripturally called the **meek**.

We cannot say that the meek are those who feel themselves inferior and that there are superiors to be looked up to, necessarily. Adam in that event could not have been meek; Jesus could not have been meek; the Heavenly Father could not be meek. While it is not Scripturally stated that the Heavenly Father is meek, yet Jesus was meek, and He was the express image of the Father's person in the flesh. Hence we would assume that the Heavenly Father possesses meekness, in distinction from haughtiness.

God Resists the Proud

Our Lord said, "I am meek and lowly of heart." Our Lord was meek in that He was teachable. He realized that even in His perfection there were things to be learned; and He learned obedience through the things which He suffered. It was because He had this quality of meekness and teachableness that the offer was made to Him to be our Savior. Without this He never would have been our Redeemer, we may assume. Without this quality He would have been self-assertive and proud, not ready to do the Father's will. And as with the Master, so with the Church.

Even small talents that are rightly directed are more valuable than larger talents that are misdirected. The pathway of life shows much large talent misdirected for lack of proper knowledge and guidance. And this lack of guidance, we may assume, has resulted from the lack of the spirit of teachableness—the lack of desire to know the best way, the Father's way. We can see that even a heathen man, if he were meek, would have much more opportunity to learn about the Lord's will than would one who thinks that he is above instruction. Whoever knows it all to begin with, is not apt to be in a condition to receive any instruction.

The Lord declares that He resists the proud. Even if they become His children they would be kept at a distance. If the proud were permitted to come nearer to the Lord, it would make them more proud; whereas, if they are kept at a distance, they may become meek and teachable and humble. We see then that all need instruction. But the only ones who are in a position to receive it are those who recognize their need and who are in the attitude to avail themselves of the Lord's offer of guidance of their judgment, of their way, of their course in life. Such as avail themselves of the privilege get a proper estimate of everything—of the things of the life present, and also of the things of the life to come.

These are the ones whom the Lord is pleased to instruct and guide in the knowledge of His Son, and into all His blessings. If they continue to be meek, He is able to make of them heirs of God and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ their Lord. We read in the Scriptures that the meek shall inherit the earth. They will inherit it under the terms of the primary and original Covenant. These will be the Seed of Abraham. From these the blessing will go to all mankind who will be obedient during the Millennial Reign. After the final test at the end of the Millennial Age, the whole world will be teachable. They will have learned the great lesson that God is the Fountain of all Wisdom; and they will have profited by this instruction.—Z. '13: 381.

◆

A great many people would like to serve the Lord with a **thousand tongues**. If they had a thousand tongues, they feel **sure** they would sing with them **all**. How do we know that we would use a **thousand** tongues, if we do not faithfully use the **one** we have? "He that is faithful in that which is **least**" will be faithful in the **greater** things.—Z. '14: 78.

◆

Beloved, let us walk with great carefulness—let us never presume upon the mercy of our God by being careless of our steps.—Z. '14: 202.

"The Lord Thy God is a Faithful God"

"O bless our God, ye people, and make the voice of His praise to be heard; which holdeth our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved."—Psalm 66:8, 9.

IN THIS Psalm the Prophet David calls upon all the world to praise the Lord. In prophetic language he exclaims: "All the earth shall worship Thee; they shall sing to Thy name!" Then he recounts the wonderful manifestation of the Power of God in His dealings with Israel; he calls upon the people to bless the Lord and sound His praises abroad. Taking a retrospective view of the dealings of Jehovah with His people, he continues: "For Thou, O God, hast proved us, Thou hast tried us as silver is tried. Thou broughtest us into the net; Thou laidst affliction upon our loins. Thou hast caused men to ride over our heads; we went through fire and through water; but Thou broughtest us out into a wealthy place!"—vs. 10-12.

The Psalmist then declared that he would enter into the house of the Lord, and would pay unto the Lord the vows which he had made in the time of his trouble. He recounts the goodness of God to himself. He tells that he had cried unto the Lord and extolled His praises, that his prayers had been answered, and that he had been lifted up and blessed and delivered. He calls upon Israel to remember all the leadings of the Lord in their past history and all His goodness to them as a people, and exhorts them to sound forth the praises of His great name. God had brought the people of Israel up out of bondage to Egypt; He had protected them through all their wilderness journeyings and ever since.

King David reminds them that they had been kept alive, that God had not permitted them to be exterminated—He had "suffered not their feet to be moved." They were not vanquished by their enemies, so long as they had trusted and obeyed. Subsequently, because of their disobedience and perversity, God caused them to be carried away into captivity in Babylon. But this was for their good, that He might prove them, and afterwards bring them—all worthy ones—back into their own land.

Let Spiritual Israel Sound His Praises!

But although this Psalm has a primary significance as relates to Natural Israel, our thought is, in harmony with the applications made by our Lord and the Apostles, that these words are even more appropriate in their application to Spiritual Israel. The Lord has brought us up out of the world. He has delivered us from the great taskmaster, Satan. He has guided us through the wilderness journey; He has fed us with the Manna from Heaven; He has brought us forth the Water of Life from the great Rock of Ages smitten for us, that we might drink and live. He has washed our feet from the dust of our wilderness way. He has faithfully disciplined and chastened us as His sons; He has gone before us through all the toilsome march, and has been our Rearward as well, to protect us from all danger and harm. If Natural Israel had great cause for thankfulness and praise, what should be our attitude, for all the marvelous manifestations of His love and care for us, His Spiritual Israel! Truly, as no other people on earth, past or present, can we praise our God! With the poet we can say:

"He was better to me than all my hopes;
He was better than all my fears;
He made a bridge of my broken works,
And a rainbow of my tears!
The billows that guarded my sea-girt path
Carried my Lord on their crest;
When I dwell on the days of my wilderness march,
I can lean on His love for the rest.

"He emptied my hands of their treasured store,
And His covenant love revealed;
There was not a wound in my aching heart,
But the balm of His breath has healed.
Oh, tender and true was the chastening sore
In wisdom that taught and tried,
Till the soul He loved was trusting in Him,
And in nothing on earth beside!

"He guided my steps where I could not see,
By ways that I had not known;
The crooked was straight and the rough made plain,
As I followed the Lord alone.
I praise Him still for the pleasant palms,
For the water-springs by the way;
For the glowing pillar of flame by night,
And the guiding cloud by day.

"There is never a watch in the dreariest halt
But some promise of love endears;
I read from the past that the future shall be
Far better than all my fears.
Like the golden pot of the wilderness bread,
Laid up with the blossoming rod,
All safe in the Ark with the Law of the Lord,
In the Covenant care of my God!"

Some Faithful Throughout the Dark Ages

Our God never fails His children: His name is Faithfulness! He has never permitted His Church to be exterminated, notwithstanding all the assaults of error and of the powers of darkness. There are still true people of God in the world, and ever have been. Throughout the Dark Ages, the great fact of our Redeemer's sacrifice for sin was still held by some of the true saints of the Lord. This precious truth was never completely lost during those years of darkness and obscurity, and in God's due time His Church emerged from the wilderness, "leaning upon the arm of her Beloved." The light has since grown brighter and brighter to the faithful, watching ones. And what a flood of glory now shines upon the path of the saints!

"Looking back, we praise the way
God has led us day by day!"

The saints of God during the past centuries did not need these additional blessings which are supplied to the faithful of today, but their every need was supplied. We are living in the days of the "cleansed Sanctuary." More Truth is now due than at any time in the history of the Church. Truly, our

Lord has "brought us into His banqueting House, and His banner over us is Love!" (Cant. 2:4.) Truly, "He holdeth our soul in life, and suffereth not our feet to be moved," despite all the thousand snares laid for our feet by the great Adversary and his servants—many of them unwittingly serving him. We can see that long ago we might have been overcome by the Adversary's attacks had not our God been a Wall of Protection round about us.

His Saints Shall Never Be Moved

"Our lines have fallen unto us in pleasant places!" (Psalm 16:6.) But it is only the faithful who are thus kept. We are not to understand that the Lord keeps any who do not themselves make the proper effort to **know** the will of God that they may **do** it; it is those who are following in the footsteps of Jesus, doing all in their power to please the Lord as they are able to discern the way wherein He would have them walk. These are today causing the voice of His praise to be heard, and grace sufficient is their portion. If the trials of faith, submission and trust shall be greater in the near future than they have yet been, these faithful ones will not fall. Their feet shall not be moved, even though a host encamp against them, and thousands fall at their side. "Here is the patience and the faith of the saints." These will be strong in the Lord and in the power of His might, even though they be required for a time to follow where they cannot see.

Let us therefore go forward with good courage, knowing that He who hath led us thus far will continue to lead. He who favored us first will favor us last; and "He that is on our side is greater than all they that be against us." Thanks be to God that His grace has preserved us, that He has kept us from falling, that so many of us are still of one heart and one mind to go forward unflinchingly, whatever the coming days may bring! If they shall bring hardship and persecution, pain and trial, His grace will uphold us still. If they shall bring us tests of faith and endurance, His promises will not fail. Let our entire trust be centered in God. Let us continue to rejoice in Him. "Let Him that glorieth, glory in this, that he understandeth and knoweth Me, that I am the Lord, which exerciseth loving kindness, judgment and righteousness in the earth; for in these things do I delight, saith the Lord." (Jeremiah 9:24.) Testings will be permitted to come upon the people of God for the very purpose of sifting out all who are not truly His. Then let us stand fast, knowing that He is faithful.—Z. '14:216, 217.

KERNELS KERNELS KERNELS

Once in grace under divine protection and oversight, means **always in grace until we shall have done despite to the spirit of favor,** by sinning deliberately, repudiating either the Lord or his Word or its spirit.—Z. '98:108.

◇

The Lord's promise to Moses was, "My Presence shall go with thee, and I will give thee rest." And He promised to be with the Israelites. He gave them assurance that they might recognize His power in their midst; for God's energy in all the affairs of earth, as of the Universe, is not merely a power to know the things that are happening, but **to control all events that they may outwork His designs. He guides and assists the efforts of His people.**—Z. '14:25.

◇

SELF OUR SPECIAL FOE

The New Creature is obliged to fight against and to control the flesh. This is a great battle which each fights for himself. Each soldier may more or less assist and set an example to the other soldiers, but the chief battle is with **himself.** It is a **hand-to-hand** conflict.—Z. '14:54.

◇

Sanctification progresses as long as the individual allows the Truth to have its designed influence in his life.—Z. '14:227.

◇

Yes, praise the Lord! he chooses his own instruments, and whets and grinds and polishes them for the more effectual service, and wields them with force and power in the service of his people; but in all the painful and laborious service he has special care, also, for the willing and faithful instrument. He will not suffer it to be tried beyond that which it is able to endure; nor will he suffer it to be exalted without some counterbalancing thorn in the flesh to preserve its equilibrium.—Z. '11:104.

◇

At Moses' second presentation of himself to Israel he did not address them personally and directly, as at the first, God having said to him, "Aaron shall be thy prophet (or mouthpiece), and thou shalt be a god unto Aaron." This item of the type would seem to imply just what we see to be the fact of the case now, viz., that the Lord Jesus does not address Himself to the true Israelites in person now, as at the first advent, but through His agent, through a mouthpiece.—Z. '11:215.

◇

Well it is that all of God's people should accept Joseph's words, "See that ye fall not out one with another by the way." It is the way planned for us by the Lord. It is a narrow and difficult way, full of adversities to the flesh, and trials and tests to the spirit. Proportionately, there should be love and sympathy, co-operation and helpfulness. The words of the Psalmist were evidently prophetically written as respects the Church, the Lord's brethren: "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity."—Z. '13:141, 142.

◇

The most happy condition of mind conceivable is the one of full rest and confidence in the Lord—satisfied with God's appointments and provisions. And this is especially appropriate to the Spiritual Israelites, and particularly the Royal Priesthood, who have made a full surrender to the Lord, a Covenant by sacrifice, which includes all earthly rights and interests. Happy is it for such if they can sing with the spirit and with the understanding also:

"Content whatever lot I see,
Since 'tis my God that leadeth me."

The spirit of discontent looks away from the Heavenly Manna of Divine provision, longing for other food of their own provision, or of other earthly supply. The Lord grants such an opportunity of feasting to the full on what they are desiring, and as a result, the murmurers cease from being members of the Lord's family and have no further opportunity of partaking of the Manna He provides in sufficient quantity.—Z. '13:268.

◆

In times of tribulation the Lord's presence and comfort are most precious to his saints, and they begin to learn what it means to live "in the spirit"—above the world, and hence to a great extent unaffected by its conditions and circumstances.—Z. '93:366.

◆

To ignore or depreciate the human reason is, to greatly undervalue God's gift—our greatest blessing and highest endowment. That God would not have us do so is very manifest from his constant appeals to the human reason in the presentation of his truth. Divine truth is set before us as a complete and philosophical system, consistent with itself and with the divine character in every element and feature; and when God would reveal it to his people, he inspired his specially chosen and prepared Apostle (Paul—Gal. 1:15; Acts 9:15) to present it to us with all the power and force of logical deduction, so that our faith in his plan might be a **reasonable faith,** and that we might be able to give to our fellow-men a reason for the hope that is in us.—Z. '93:247.

◆

Righteousness, and the hope of the rewards of righteousness through Christ, are the legitimate effects of the truth upon the heart that truly receives it. But where it is only received into the head, and is resisted in the heart, it only deepens the dye of sin by hardening the heart, thus bringing additional condemnation, and a fearful looking for of judgment.—Heb. 10:27; Z. '94:214.

◆

The test of endurance is proving a severe test for some; and it will surely be yet more severe. "Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin." There is no assurance whatever that any will be able to stand in this evil day who have not devoted themselves **fully and unreservedly to the Lord.** But those who have done so, and who are still faithful to their covenant, have cause to rejoice in Christ Jesus, whose grace is sufficient for them.—Z. '94:217.

◆

Those of the consecrated who have children and young people under their care have much to do in shaping their course and in leading them to Christ, by throwing around them the influences of their own consecrated lives, and imparting to them such instruction as their own acquaintance with the truth and their more matured experience and judgment can give. Such efforts, properly directed, are not lost upon the young.

Let them see both in your **example** and teaching how distinctly the line is drawn between the **consecrated** believer and the world;—that there is no compromise with the world:—that to follow Christ is to renounce the world with all its ambitions, its gayety and its pleasures and companionship.—Z. '94:219.

◆

When the heart is true and loyal, God does not mark our infirmities in a record against us. They are not imputed to us, but are freely forgiven through Christ in whose merit we trust and whose righteousness is our glorious dress,—arrayed in which, we may come with humble boldness, even into the presence of the King of kings and Lord of lords.—Z. '95:20.

◆

Sorrows may, and often will, come in like a flood, but the Lord is our helper in all these things. The soul that has never known the discipline of sorrow and trouble has never yet learned the preciousness of the Lord's love and helpfulness. It is in seasons of overwhelming sorrow, when we draw near to the Lord, that he draws specially near to us.—Z. '95:20.

◆

The "brethren" all have the lamp, the sure word of prophecy mentioned by Peter, as a light in a dark place; and while they keep the proper attitude of brethren, as faithful, meek and humble students of the Word, they will at no time be in darkness; **they** will always have the truth supplied as meat in **due season.** At no time have those then living in full harmony with God been left in ignorance of necessary truth, to grope their way in the dark with the world. Abraham and Lot knew of the destruction of Sodom **beforehand,** God saying, "Shall I hide from Abraham that thing which I do," (Gen. 18:17.) Noah knew of the flood in time to build the ark, and was informed of the **very day** that he should go into it. At the first advent, too, Simeon and Anna, and the wise men of the East, knew to expect Messiah. In fact, the expectation was general then. (Luke 2:25-38; Matt. 2:2; Luke 3:15.) And if God so dealt with the house of servants, shall he do less for the house of Sons? Our Lord and Head has said, "Henceforth I call you not servants, for the servant knoweth not what his Lord doeth; but I have called you friends, for all things **that I have heard of my Father I have made known unto you."** Our Lord certainly shall know of the times and seasons in **due time,** since he is to accomplish the plan, and unless **he has changed,** he will make known the plans to those close to him and associated in his work—**his friends, his saints.**—B. 21.

◆

As to our ability to discern whether or not we are keeping our garments clean, only the individual himself can know to what extent he has watched his conduct and kept up his communication with the Lord and daily scrutinized life's affairs, the incidents of the day, and asked forgiveness for shortcomings and trespasses. Others might surmise, but they could not know. We all have sense enough to know what things are right and what are wrong. If the wrong thing seems **not very wrong,** it would indicate that we are growing careless in regard to our robe. As a result we would have less interest in the Truth, less interest in keeping our robes clean, less interest in prayer meetings, etc. Between such and the Lord there would be a cloud, and a condition of leanness would be sure to follow.—Z. '11: 341, 342.

◆

Now the very mention of prophetic time is received very generally with an incredulous smile, or with open contempt, even by Christians who well know that prophecy and chronology constitute a large proportion of God's revelation.

But blessed is he
"Who bears unmoved the world's dark frown,
Nor heeds its scornful smile;
Whom seas of trouble cannot drown,
Nor Satan's arts beguile." . . .

Prophetic time was given, not to alarm the world—nor for the world in any sense—but to enlighten, strengthen, comfort, encourage and guide **the Church** in the troublous times in the end of the age. Therefore it is written, None of the wicked shall understand, but the wise only. To these, this becomes meat in due season, and it, with other meat, will strengthen those who use it, so that they will be "able to stand in the evil day."—B. 30.

◆

Let none of the truly consecrated undervalue the prophetic time-evidences, which were designed to guide our words and deeds in the early Dawn of the Millennial Day, before sunrise, while the world and the nominal church are yet asleep. . . . All God's plans are working together in **time,** as well as in **kind,** to the development of his glorious purposes. —B. 31.

◆

Gratitude is a most reasonable trait of character and is frequently found even in the brute creation. It is impossible to imagine a perfect human being or an angel acceptable to God without this quality. We might almost say that the degree of our acceptance with God is measured by our gratitude.—Z. '14:139.

◆

We would rather be without all the luxuries of life, and have the Truth. We would rather suffer the loss of everything else than suffer the loss of our being.

If everything else in life were taken from us, and we were without a penny in the world, we would still be rich toward God if we had the Truth.—Z. '13: 315.

◆

Love for the brethren means that we will do them no injury, that we will speak no evil respecting them unless of absolute necessity; and, finally, that we will not even surmise evil in respect to their words and deeds. "Love is the fulfilling of the Law." "He that dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God (by His Spirit dwelleth) in him." For though we should give all our goods to feed the poor, and though we should even sacrifice our bodies to be burned in the interests of righteousness, yet if we have not **love—the Spirit of love**—we are nothing in God's sight.—Romans 13:10; 1 John 4:16; 1 Cor. 13:3; Z. '13: 341.

Since we cannot do much in a material way for men as we meet them in the walks of life, day by day, how can we do them good? One of the easiest ways is to look happy ourselves and thus inspire happiness in others. A person who goes about looking miserable is not likely to make others feel happy. But if we cannot always look **very** happy, let us look as happy as we can, and thus we will be doing good to a great many people whom we meet throughout the day. This we can do even if we have no money with which to help others. Look happy, and try thus to make **them** happy. And secondly, if we have no money, we can give a kind word, a smile, a pleasant tone, a little civility, wherever proper.—Z. '13: 358.

◆

Everything in the Scriptures points us to the fact that humility is a quality most essential to all of the Lord's people who would be used of the Lord in any important or special work for Him. If the followers of the Lord could continually keep this in memory, and would persistently shape their course accordingly, how much they would be used we may be sure. Any service for the Lord is an honor; but the more we are permitted to serve, the more will be our blessing in the present life and the greater also will be our reward in the life to come. Let us, therefore, as the Apostle says, humble ourselves under God's mighty hand, that He may exalt us in due time.—Z. '13:189.

◆

It is remarkable that on so many occasions our Lord said remarkable things to not very remarkable people under not very remarkable circumstances. There is encouragement in this for all of his followers; indeed we find that the Lord's principal communications all through the Gospel age have been with the humble—"not many wise, not many great, not many learned hath God chosen, but the poor of this world, rich in faith, to be heirs of the Kingdom." As, then, by the grace of God, we have heard the voice divine speaking peace through Jesus Christ, let us rejoice, yet let us feel humble too, remembering that he is taking of the ignoble things of the world with a view to making of these things the noble, that will reflect his glory and show forth his praise through all eternity as marks of his grace. —Z '.05: 30.

◆

The "reckoning" of Scripture is merely that of justification, making up for our inherited deficiencies and weaknesses. There is no reckoning of sacrifice. Being blemished by nature we have nothing whatever to sacrifice unless first we are counted or reckoned as justified,—made whole, cleansed. Such the Apostle urges, "I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God (in your justification) that ye present your bodies living sacrifices, holy, acceptable to God, your reasonable service." The sacrifice must be an actual one of a body reckoned perfect, but actually very imperfect. We cannot be reckoned to suffer with Christ if we do not suffer with him, and hence there is nothing in the Scriptures to this effect. On the contrary, "If we (actually) suffer with him, we shall also be glorified together." It will not do, to figure away these plain limitations of the Scriptures.—Z. '05: 54.

Old Corn Gems

NUMBER SIXTY-THREE

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Victory or Death!

"But I keep under my body, and bring it into subjection, lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway."—1 Cor. 9:27.

THIS battle, then, that begins at the time of our consecration, continues until the end—our death. It will be the death either of the New Creature or of the old creature. So far as our earthly interests are concerned, we sacrifice them fully—we exchange them for the opportunity of gaining glory, honor, immortality, joint-heirship with the Lord, participation in the Divine nature. So, as the Apostle suggests, we are not to be expending our strength merely on a bag of wind, but we are to fight to some purpose.

"For me to live is Christ," says the Apostle; and for me to **lose** in this battle is for me to perish as a New Creature, and this means that the Second Death would be mine. We should realize that in our position as Christians our eternal interests are at stake. We fear of losing the eternal life, which we shall surely lose if we fail to be overcomers.

The Apostle Peter writes, "Seeing, then, that all these things shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought ye to be in all holy conversation and godliness; . . . that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot, and blameless!" (2 Peter 3:11, 14.) With this anticipation, how serious life should be!

The Christian who knows about these things of the future, and who lives in anticipation of them, has a joy and a peace of which the world knows nothing. One week of such living is worth more than an entire lifetime with only such things as the world has to offer. And if now we enjoy living the new life, and entering by faith into the things that the Lord has in reservation for us, what will be the **realization!** If we would lose much in the present time by losing our hope and faith, what would it be to lose these things eternally!

As we realize this, we see that we cannot afford one moment of carelessness. The man engaged in combat with the animal knows that the bruised and wounded animal seeks to kill him. So the Apostle tells us, the **old nature** strives to kill the **New Nature.** Therefore the New Nature must see to it that it uses all its strength to gain the victory. The Lord has promised us grace sufficient for every time of need. If we are overcome by the old nature, it will not be because we have not strength sufficient for the victory; for if we call upon the Lord, He will sustain us. But the Lord will test our loyalty, our faith, our strength of character, our alertness of mind. And the victory is sure, so long as our trust is in Him!—Z. '15:296, 297.

GENERAL CONVENTION

General Convention of Standfast Bible Students, Saturday, Sunday and Monday, September 3rd, 4th and 5th, 1921, in the Upper Dominion Hall, 339 Pender Street W., Vancouver, B.C.

The Old Corn Gem Studies will be taken from articles in the OLD CORN GEMS, No. 64. There will be a Temple Study on "The Life Giving River."

Two meals will be provided daily by the Vancouver Ecclesia for all Conventioneers. Reception Committee will meet boats and trains. For further information please write to the Secretary of the Convention, Bro. Geo. H. Biddle, 816 12th Ave. W., Vancouver, B.C. Telephone Fairmont 3443.

The more faithful we are, probably the more we shall have opportunity for suffering and correspondingly will be our share in the eternal weight of glory, which God has in reservation for those that thus love him and serve him.—Z. '09:6.

◆

Our Lord declares that the blessing for persecution endured is for righteousness' sake, and the Apostle, in line with this, declared, "Let none of you suffer for evil-doing, nor as a busybody in other men's matters." This, of course, will not hinder us from being misrepresented and charged with evil-doing, even as our Lord himself was so charged. Was he not crucified under the charge of blasphemy, which, in his day, was esteemed to be the worst of all offenses? Similarly in our day we must not think it strange if the Adversary shall seek to misrepresent the facts and put light for darkness and darkness for light. It is for each of us to preserve a conscience void of offense towards God and men, that, like the Apostle of old, we may be able to call upon all men everywhere to witness whether or not we have coveted their silver or their gold, or done aught to their injury, or left undone any good toward them that was within our power.

In this connection let us remember also that the decision in each of our cases is with God. As St. Paul declares, "It is a light thing that I should be judged of you or of any man. Yea, I judge not mine own self, but he that judgeth me is the Lord." —Z. '09:39.

◆

The saints are God's peculiar care and should, therefore, be likewise the peculiar care of one another.—Z. '09:56.

◆

Those who are of the sacrificing class should know that they are sacrificing and what is their relationship to the Lord. While they cannot be so positive about others, yet they ought to know about themselves.—Z. '11:235.

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OLD CORN GEMS

NUMBER SIXTY-THREE

"And they did eat of the OLD CORN of the land on the morrow after the Passover . . . and the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the OLD CORN of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year." Joshua 5:11-12.

A SAFE RULE

"WHERE A BROTHER GIVES AN INTERPRETATION OF A SCRIPTURE WHICH DIFFERS FROM THAT GIVEN BY BROTHER RUSSELL, AND BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION SEEMS REASONABLE AND IN HARMONY WITH THE PLAN OF GOD, THEN WE BELIEVE IT A SAFE RULE TO FOLLOW BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION, FOR THE REASON THAT HE IS THE SERVANT OF THE CHURCH, SO CONSTITUTED BY THE LORD FOR THE LAODICEAN PERIOD; AND THEREFORE WE SHOULD EXPECT THE LORD TO TEACH US THROUGH HIM. WHERE THERE ARISES A DOUBT IN THE MIND AS TO WHICH INTERPRETATION IS CORRECT, THEN IT IS ALWAYS SAFER TO RESOLVE THAT DOUBT IN FAVOR OF BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION. WE BELIEVE SUCH TO BE IN HARMONY WITH THE LORD'S WILL." Z. '18:51.

Sowing and Reaping

Galatians 6:1-10.

"Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."—Verse 7.

TODAY'S Study was intended, by those who mapped out these lessons, to be a temperance lesson. There is surely a sense in which it is true that those who yield to appetites which crave injurious stimulants and narcotics will certainly reap a slavery to those appetites, a corresponding weakening of their own characters. All good people—all who have at heart their own welfare and the welfare of humanity—must surely deplore the ravages of intemperance; and any word or example that would be helpful to fellow-creatures, that would assist them to become strong characters and useful members of society, should not be withheld.

We may, however, be fully sure that nothing will completely and thoroughly liberate mankind from the weaknesses of their fallen nature, except God's appointed remedy—Messiah's Kingdom. But this conviction should not hinder us from taking our place publicly on the side of righteousness and of the best interests of humanity in respect to every question.

Let us not, on the other hand, go to the extreme which some would approve, but let us follow strictly on this, and on every subject, the teachings of the Bible. Following this course now, in this lesson, it is our duty to call attention to the fact that the Apostle's words have no reference whatever to intemperance of one kind more than another. The Apostle is not addressing the world in general; much less is he addressing some poor inebriates. He is addressing the consecrated people of God, as he declares in the opening verses of the Epistle.

These consecrated Christians the Apostle speaks of as brethren, and instructs them how they should deal with any of their fellows who might be overtaken in a fault, who might become entangled with some form of sin, not by reason of sympathy with sin, but by reason of weakness of the flesh or by unfavorable environment. The most spiritual ones of the Church should exercise themselves to bring about a restoration of the erring one to a condition of righteousness and fellowship with God. This they should do in a meek manner, remembering that they also are imperfect in the flesh, and that they also may at some time or other inadvertently fall into sin, contrary to their heart intentions.

In this manner they were to "bear one another's burdens"—assisting one another in battling against the weaknesses of the flesh and the besetments of sin. In this way they would be fulfilling the general law of Christ.

The law of Christ is a law of service and self-sacrifice in the interests of others. Those who, finding a brother overtaken in a fault, merely throw back their heads, denouncing the brother in a haughty, imperious manner, in a holier-than-thou manner, have not yet attained a proper appreciation of what is the Law of Christ—the law which is to govern all the members of the Body.

This law of Christ, the Apostle points out, is a Law of Love. Governed by this law of love, Jesus laid down His life, not merely for His friends, but even for His enemies. All therefore, who would claim to be disciples or followers of Jesus should have the same mind, the same disposition, the same spirit, and should seek to follow the same law of love. Thus the Apostle says, "We ought also to lay down our lives for the brethren" (1 John 3:16)—in seeking to assist the brethren out of difficulty and to bring them nearer to the Lord and to His standards.

Too Much Self-Esteem

The Apostle points out that one great danger which besets all the true followers of Jesus is headiness—thinking too highly of self and, therefore, not thinking highly enough of the brethren, especially of the brethren who stumble in some particular in which this individual has not himself, as yet, stumbled.

One of the first lessons to be learned is that we are really nothing, that we are bundles of imperfection, that on the strength of our own merit we could not commend ourselves to God nor have His favor. Furthermore, we are to learn that in proportion as we think of ourselves as somebody, to that same extent we are not pleasing to God, and are in His sight all the more nobodies. If, therefore, anybody think of himself as a somebody in God's sight, he should begin to realize that he is nothing, a nobody unworthy of Divine notice, except through the favor of God in Christ. Such a person is deceiving himself and is hindering his own progress in the good way.

Each one, therefore, instead of seeking to judge or to reprove his neighbor or his brother in Christ, should seek to prove out his own work. He should carefully discern to see to what extent he has made progress in the things which God has declared will be pleasing in His sight. He should seek to ascertain to what extent he has put away anger, malice, hatred, envy, strife, and to what extent he has put on the graces of God's Holy Spirit; namely, meekness, gentleness, patience, long-suffering, brotherly kindness, love.

To whatever extent he can see that he is making progress along these Scripturally defined lines, to that extent he has ground for rejoicing, without in any sense or degree seeking to compare himself with others and thus to estimate himself wholly by the imperfections which he may see in others. By following this course, each should be seeking to find out his own weaknesses, seeking to bear his own burdens and seeking, therefore, not to be a burden or a reproach to others—either to the Lord or to the brethren.

Along the lines of this teaching, there is no room for clericism. Rather, as the Apostle says, "Those who are taught in the Word should communicate with those who teach in all good things," telling them of any blessings received or of any clearer views of the Word of God which have come to them. The Apostle may also have meant that those who receive blessings from a teacher may properly seek opportunity for recompensing that teacher, either with thanks or with co-operation or in some other way helping the teacher to forward his work of teaching in any good and profitable manner.

There is a principle at stake here. God operates along the lines of justice, and He cannot be deceived. His eye reads the heart, the motive, the intention. We might even temporarily deceive ourselves with specious arguments, but no one can deceive God. It is a principle of the Divine arrangement that sowing shall bring reaping, and that the thing reaped shall be of the same character as the thing sowed.—Galatians 6:7.

The Christian's Arduous Task

The world does not engage in this sowing and reaping that the Apostle speaks of; only the Church do so. The Church is composed of those who have heard the Voice of God offering forgiveness of sins through Jesus Christ to all those who become His disciples—offering also Divine assistance and the begetting of the Holy Spirit to a new nature and to glory, honor and immortality. All who have really and truly become followers of Christ, who have taken up their cross and have covenanted self-denial in walking in the footsteps of the Master—these alone are true Christians.

It is for these to order their steps in harmony with the Lord's leadings and to know that the results of their lives will be in proportion as they follow their Covenant of Self-sacrifice and faithfulness as disciples of Jesus. These have covenanted to give up the world, its aims, its objects, its ambitions—to sacrifice all these, that they may become "heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ" Jesus their Lord in the Heavenly inheritance.—Romans 8:17.

These should understand that it is not sufficient to agree to sow to the Spirit, but that the reaping of spiritual blessings and of heart development will depend upon their faithfulness in sowing to these ends. "He that soweth to the Spirit"—that is, he that lives a spiritual life, seeking to serve the will or Spirit of God in all of his words, deeds and thoughts—will reap the largest crop of spiritual development in the various qualities which go to make up the character-likeness of the Lord Jesus Christ.

On the other hand, those who sow to the flesh—that is, who live after the flesh, seeking to please their own flesh, seeking to do according to their fleshly minds or wills, or seeking to please the fleshly minds or wills of their friends or relatives—these must only expect that in their case the flesh thus cultivated will grow the stronger in power to control their lives, and that they will make proportionately less progress along the lines of the Spirit.

In other words, the Apostle explains that every time we give heed to the fleshly inclinations of our fallen natures, we are hindering our own spiritual progress, and that the tendency of all such yielding to the flesh is toward corruption, toward death. On the other hand, to whatever extent we mortify the inclinations of the flesh, and seek to live in harmony with the Spirit of the Lord, in that same proportion we shall grow strong spiritually, and be prepared for the everlasting life on the spirit plane which God has promised to those who shall demonstrate their love for Him and their loyalty to the principles of righteousness.

This does not mean that only those who attain the complete mastery of the flesh will receive any blessing from the Lord, but that unless we manifest to the Lord an appreciation of the spiritual things, we shall not make progress therein, shall not be fit for everlasting life and shall not receive it; whereas, on the contrary, if our conduct shall manifest to the Lord our love for truth and righteousness and our desire to please Him, however weak our flesh, He will account such worthy of everlasting life, knowing that when they shall have the perfect bodies of the resurrection, they will be glad to live in absolute harmony with the Divine arrangements. Thus the Apostle on another occasion wrote, "The righteousness of the Law is fulfilled in us, who are walking not after the flesh, but after the Spirit."—Romans 8:4.

Faithful Continuance in Well-Doing

In verses 9 and 10, the Apostle draws his argument to a conclusion. All who wish to do right—all who wish to live according to the lines marked out by the Holy Spirit through the words of Jesus and the Apostles—should not only start out well by making a full consecration, but should continue faithful, and not be weary of striving against sin and of being faithful to righteousness.

God is seeking to develop and to fix character in His people; and in due time, after they shall have suffered awhile, fought and battled for a time against the weaknesses of the flesh, they will reap the reward; they will get the new bodies that God has promised—the Resurrection bodies. Then their battling and trials will all be ended; for the new bodies will be in perfect accord with the new will, and there will be no cause of conflict between the two. The work of grace will then go grandly forward, through them, for the blessing of the world.

And, says the Apostle, let us not merely avoid harshness toward those who have been overtaken in a fault, let us not merely guard ourselves that we shall sow to the spirit and not to the flesh, and let us not merely avoid weariness in this good way; but let us additionally, "as we find opportunity, do good unto all men, especially to those who are of the Household of Faith." In so doing, we shall be copying our Heavenly Father's character. He is the Fountain of Blessing. From Him come the blessings of the present life—the sunshine and the rain—upon both the just and the unjust, upon the evil and the good.

As the Heavenly Father is continually giving blessings, rather than seeking favors, so we as His advanced and developed children are to seek to have the same character-likeness, the same disposition, the same mind; namely, a disposition to do good to everybody, but especially an earnest desire to do good unto all who are the Lord's children—unto all who are of the Household of Faith.—Z. '14:317-318.

Sowing to the Flesh—The Result Death

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked; for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap."—Galatians 6:7.

IN THIS text the Apostle seems to be emphasizing the fact that it is not enough that we make a consecration of ourselves to God, but we need to show by the earnestness of our conduct that we have received a transforming power into our lives. If we say that we are New Creatures and make a change merely in our **profession**, while still sowing to the flesh, the result will be not according to our profession, but according to our **doing**; and we shall reap the reward—**corruption**. Others may be deceived, and we may be **deceived ourselves**; but God will not be deceived. If we, on the contrary, to the best of our ability to understand the Lord's will, lay down our lives, sowing to the Spirit, then shall we reap everlasting life.

The Apostle is addressing the saints, the consecrated people of God, those who have presented their bodies living sacrifices, and whose sacrifices have been made acceptable through the merit of Christ. Being made New Creatures by the begetting of the Holy Spirit, these are to go on to reach perfection on the spirit plane.

If we, then, who are of this class, live after the flesh—according to the desires of the flesh—we shall **die**. This does not mean that if any of God's people should have some earthly desire or some wrong sentiment spring up in their minds they would die instantly, or that they would instantly be cut off from any hope of future life on the spirit plane. The thought is that if we **live** after the flesh—pursue the desires of the flesh, follow that course in life—the end will be death. And every seed thus sown tends **toward** death. If we sow to the flesh, we shall of the flesh reap corruption.

Certain Care for the Body Necessary

It would not be necessarily true in such sowing that we would **wish** to sow to the flesh. The Apostle intimates that the class he is addressing do **not** wish to sow to the flesh, but wish to do otherwise. But if we do sow to the flesh—to sensuality or to any earthly desires contrary to the new nature—the crop will come by and by. We might like to have better clothes and delicious food; we might desire to live on a good street and in a fine house; and these would not necessarily be sinful things. All these things are of the flesh, but they are not what the Apostle has especially in mind here. He is thinking of things of the fallen flesh, which are always contrary to the Spirit.

If we practise those things which our understanding of God's Word teaches us He would not approve, seeds are thus sown to the flesh. **Every inch that we yield**—whether in thought, word or action—means so much **decrease** of spiritual power; and the New Creature grows weaker. This might be done as respects our food and clothing, our home, our time, etc., and this would be sowing to the flesh in such instances. If in accordance with our judgment of the Lord's will, we follow a course with a view to keeping our body in condition for best service, and if then our body, our flesh, has a craving for certain things that would not be for our spiritual welfare, the New Creature is to say, "No, you cannot have it"; or "These things are too expensive for **you**."

There are not many who have made a sacrifice of their flesh; but it is to those who have done this that the Apostle is speaking. I, as the New Creature, say to the Old Creature—the body—"I shall give you what I think is for your **good**. I do not understand that the Lord wishes me to kill you at once, for I need your service: but the Lord wishes me to have some practise in self-denial. You shall not have your desire now, because you do not really need it. I may, however, give it to you some time again, if I think that then you **need** it and if you are good."

The Blacksmith and the Donkey

If the New Creature gives a free rein to the old creature about what he shall read, or eat, how long he shall sleep, at what time he shall get up, where he shall go and how long he shall stay, etc., the New Creature will have his hands full—will he not? The Spirit of the Lord is to actuate the New Creature in thought, word and action and decide what he is to do, what he shall eat, where he shall go—is to control everything. If we sow to the Spirit, if we walk after the Spirit, we shall be overcomers, we shall reap life-everlasting. We must **not yield** to the old creature. By yielding we are sowing seed to the flesh, and by and by the old creature will say, "You have been in the habit of giving that to me, and you **must** let me have it"; and the result is likely to be disastrous to the New Creature.

The matter reminds us of one of Æsop's fables which many of us have read. On a cold, frosty morning, a donkey pushed his nose in at the door of a blacksmith shop, where it was warm from a glowing fire. The blacksmith said to the donkey, "Get out!" The donkey replied, "You are stingy! I am only getting my nose warm." Presently the blacksmith looked around and perceived that the donkey had his whole head in. The blacksmith said, "Now get out, will you?" But the donkey pleaded that he was only getting a little breath of warm air, that his head surely would not trouble the blacksmith. After awhile the blacksmith looked again and saw that the donkey was half-way into the shop. Then he shouted, "Get out! get out!" But the donkey still insisted that he was only getting a little warm. So the blacksmith yielded. By and by he looked again and saw that the donkey was altogether in the shop. Then he sprang forward shouting excitedly, "Get out!" But the donkey said triumphantly, "Which of us will get out?" And thereupon he turned around and began to kick at the blacksmith. The donkey was in full **control.**

"The End of That Way Is Death"

So it will be with us if we begin a course of yielding little by little to the desires of the fleshly mind. The end of the way which the flesh craves, the Apostle teaches us, is death. St. Paul does not say that the **beginning** of that way is death; but that the beginning of that way **leads toward** death. If the old creature has gained a leeway, every step that is taken must be retraced, or the case is hopeless. The New Creature is to say to the old creature, **"You are not to be my master!"** The old creature is to be **made to know** that the **New Creature** is the Master. The New Creature develops at the expense of the old creature, the old nature, which must be put to death.

These things are not true of the world now, but will be true of them as respects their **sinful** flesh, by and by. If any during the Millennium shall yield to the fallen flesh, gradually becoming more and more alienated from the Lord, the end of that way will be death. But they will have every assistance in their efforts to resist sin and to develop righteousness. To the Church of Christ our text is applicable **now** and in the fullest sense. Let those of us now on trial for life or death eternal, watch and pray!—Z. '16:231.

Discerning the Will of God

"Teach me Thy way, O Lord."—Psalm 27:11.

THE LORD does not wish us to walk by **sight,** and thus to have **no difficulty** in discerning His will. Therefore He puts matters in such a way that both our **obedience** and our **perseverance** are tested; for we are to walk by faith and not by sight. In order to do this, we should daily take everything to the Lord in prayer. We should not undertake anything without seeking to know the will of the Lord respecting the matter.

Since, however, we have no miraculous insight through which we may know what is the will of God in all the details of every-day life, we are not always able to discern that will. When the matter is one about which the Scriptures give instructions, then the way is clear; for the only course which the child of God desires to follow is that of **obedience.** But when the matter is such as depends upon **one's own judgment,** then the way is not so clear. Realizing that our judgment is not sufficient, we should not tax our minds with what we know is beyond our power to decide, but should leave the matter to the Lord.

We know that the Lord can direct our course in whatever way He chooses, if we put ourselves under His care. So at the beginning of the day we can say, "Lord, here am I; I thank Thee for the privilege of another day, which I hope will be full of opportunities for serving the Truth and the brethren. I ask Thee to direct my thoughts, words and conduct, that I may serve Thee acceptably." **Then** we may go forth and use our best judgment.

If the Lord wants to lead us in one direction or another, that is His part, not ours. We have solicited His guidance; and our eyes are alert to know and to do His will at any cost. In this attitude we may rest easy, knowing that God is able and willing to overrule all things for His glory and our profit.

As a child, the Editor noticed that some people had a **certain way** of going to the Lord with all of their affairs. They would open their Bibles at random; and whatever verse their thumb or finger happened to touch they would consider to be the Lord's message to them; and they would follow its suggestion carefully. Sometimes the text to which they opened seemed to be a remarkable answer to their prayer.

This method is not one with which the Editor desires to find fault. But since it did not appeal to his judgment, he took the matter to the Lord in prayer and said, "Father, I am really afraid to adopt this plan. So if it please Thee, I would rather be directed by my judgment than by this method; for my mind does not seem capable of accepting it." The Lord seems to have taken him at his word.

There is surely a reason why right is right in every matter; and we should desire to know it. We should desire to know why God wishes a matter **this** way rather than **that** way; not that we doubt His wisdom, but that we may enter into the **spirit** of the Divine regulations. The Editor's method of seeking Divine guidance is to study the Scriptures, taking all of the verses bearing upon the subject under consideration, and trying to find the **underlying principle** of God's dealings and teachings.

By this method he has much more happiness than he otherwise could have. By following the other method he could not know whether God or the Devil or chance would open the Bible for him. He much prefers to follow what he believes to be the teaching of the Word of God; that is, to commit all to the Father in prayer, asking Him to guide both reason and judgment, and then go out and use that judgment and reason to the best of his ability. Even if God should permit him to use his judgment in a way that afterward appeared not to have been the best, nevertheless the Father may use it to bring some great blessing or profitable lesson. By **judgment,** of course, he means his understanding of the Father's Word and of His providential leadings. Thus doing, he knows that all things shall work together for good.—Rom. 8:28; Z. '13:104, 105.

The New Creature's Struggle for Existence

"I keep my body under and bring it into subjection. . . . lest I myself should be a castaway."—1 Corinthians 9:27.

THERE is a **duality** in Christians that is not to be recognized in others. The natural man has no distinct entity aside from his body. The New Creature is recognized as having a life and entity distinct from the body; and this New Creature is temporarily being developed and nourished in the old body. The old body has its will, its desires. The New Creature has its interests, its desires. Consequently there is a conflict between them.

In the first part of the text—"I keep my body under"—we may see the thought of **mastery.** The New Creature should say, "I am the master—I will not allow my body to master me," as though there were fear lest the old creature should get the New Creature down and strangle it. It is a battle to determine which will win, which will live and not be destroyed.

The first thing, then, is for the New Creature to get the body under, and thus have the mastery. The New Creature having gained the mastery should, as a secondary step, bring the old nature into subjection and not do its bidding. The old creature is continually trying to assert itself. Very frequently it argues as to how it should be treated and how it should not be treated. Sometimes through false sympathy it might be treated too well.

We must remember that the **life** of the **old creature** means the **death** of the **New Creature.** We must vanquish the flesh; and we shall not be the **victor** until the flesh is entirely destroyed. Our victories as New Creatures will not be gained until we as old creatures die. So the battle is **unto the death,** and there should be no particular sympathy between the two natures.

That which would enliven, encourage, the flesh in any way is a foe, and must be banished from our hearts. This might lead in some cases to extremes of conduct, and we might be judged as extremists by the world. But the world is not our judge. The world has no "exceeding great and precious promises" before them. They are a different class from us altogether. We are not to take our instructions from them, nor to allow them to shape our view of the matter, but we are to use the spirit of a sound mind in all things.

Death of the Flesh Essential

The Apostle says that we are to be dead with Christ, to suffer with Him. The Master invites us to take up our cross and follow Him. This means the complete subjection of the flesh—the **death of the flesh.** If we fail to gain the victory over the flesh, we shall fail to gain the great prize. The ones who are to gain the prize of the High Calling are those who will crucify the flesh, who will put it to death. We are to be "more than conquerors."

This is what the Apostle means: But I keep my body under and bring it into subjection: lest that by any means, when I have preached to others, I myself should be a castaway. All the preaching to others will not get me into the Kingdom. I must keep my body under and bring it into subjection, using **all diligence.** Whatever I would get out of it, my pampering it in any way would be to my disadvantage. I am to be on the lookout to accomplish the victory, lest I should be a castaway.

Knowledge of the New Will Conditional

Elsewhere the Apostle has told us that the Church is a New Creation of God; and that to those begotten again of the Holy Spirit old things pass away and all things become new. (2 Corinthians 5:17.) Addressing the same class, he says, "Ye have put off the old man with his deeds." We have put off the old man, the natural, fallen man; with his privileges as the successor of Adam, in the same sense that we put off the old will and have received a new mind, in Christ. Instead, therefore, of belonging to the human family, we have stepped into membership in the Body of Christ—out of the old into the new.

The Body of Christ is not **human**, but **spiritual**. We have made this transfer from one family, with its hopes and interests, into the other. The old man is in a fallen and dilapidated condition in every way; and we realize that its deeds were far from satisfactory to ourselves, and especially unsatisfactory in God's sight. We, therefore, by our wills, stepped out of this condition, under guidance from on High. We have made a full consecration of all the old rights and interests, which we had in the old nature, in order that we may be in the New Man, Christ.

As we have come into membership in the New Man, Christ, of which Jesus is the Head, we have under this Head an increase of knowledge. "We are renewed in knowledge after the image of Him that created us." The New Creature comes to a more and more clear knowledge of the new will in proportion as he seeks to put down the human will and to be directed by the Holy Spirit.

It would seem, therefore, that we put off the old man, Adam, and the human nature in general, in order that we may put on Christ and be found in Him, as members of His Body, and may receive with Him a share in the exceeding glory, and ultimately be accounted worthy of a place in the Kingdom of God. In proportion as we grow in grace, in knowledge, our appreciation of the Heavenly things increases. Thus our renewing progresses. . . . The **New** Creature thus puts off the **old** and puts on the **new**. Its existence depends on this transformation. Failure means Second Death. Barely to overcome would mean a lower place on the spirit plane—in the "Great Company." Only the "more than conquerors" will get joint-heirship with their Lord—with exceeding glory and the divine nature. —Z. '13:119.

God's Sympathy For His People

"Thus saith the High and Lofty One that inhabiteth eternity, whose Name is Holy: I dwell in the high and holy place, with him that is of a contrite and humble spirit, to revive the spirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite ones." —Isaiah 57:15.

JEHOVAH is the High and Lofty One who inhabits eternity. Before the mountains were brought forth, or the hills, before the First-born was created, He is God. To Moses at the burning bush, He said, "I AM THAT I AM." (Exodus 3:14.) Our God is very great, very wise, very high. Nevertheless, the Scriptures show us that He is also very sympathetic. He is a God of Mercy and of Love.

The passage from which our text is taken informs us that if God were to contend with humanity, the end of the strife would be that mankind would be blotted out of existence. But He remembers that we are dust, and has compassion upon us. In this respect He is different from the gods of the heathen, who are domineering, apparently bent on wreaking vengeance upon those in their power.

Besides being very great and lofty, our God is particularly sympathetic towards those who are of a broken and contrite heart, whose spirit is humble, who realize that they are imperfect, who desire to be in accord with Him, and to dwell in holiness. To such He is ever near—to revive the spirit of the humble, to give them strength. He will not trample them into the dust, as many an **earthly** potentate has done to his subjects, but will assist them in the right way, and revive the heart of the contrite. These are to know that our God is a God of sympathy, compassion and love, who takes pleasure in reviving their hearts and in bringing them back into harmony with Him, if they are willing to be led.

Discouragement With Self a Favorable Condition

There is a difference between a broken and a contrite heart. A heart is broken when it is bowed down with grief and sorrow: a heart is contrite when it has a quiet, deep, continual sorrow for acts not in harmony with righteousness. A broken **will** is not necessarily the same: for there are those whose wills are broken, but who are not submissive to the Divine will.

To be repentant is to be thoroughly submissive to the Divine will, and implies a change of mental attitude toward sin. This humble, discouraged condition becomes a very favorable one if the person will seek Divine assistance, if he will become submissive to the Lord and ready to do the Divine will. Such will surely receive the blessing of God: for the Lord is very nigh to every one who is broken-hearted. The way to full consecration would be very short to him.

If such as be of contrite heart will be submissive to the Lord, He will save them from their difficulties and bring them into a large place, as the Prophet David states. (Psalm 18:19.) This does not necessarily mean that He will deliver them from financial troubles, but that He will give them peace and rest, which are better than money. If they have family troubles, they will find in Him a superior Friend, who is able and willing to administer superior consolation and refreshment.

Come, ye disconsolate! where'er ye languish,
Come to the mercy-seat, fervently kneel:
Here bring your wounded hearts; here tell your anguish;
Earth hath no sorrow that heaven cannot heal.

Joy of the desolate, light of the straying,
Hope of the penitent, fadeless and pure!
Here speaks the Comforter, tenderly saying,
Earth hath no sorrow that heaven cannot cure.

The Lord's Method of Deliverance

The Scriptures assure us that, "There is none righteous, no, not one." There is **relative** righteousness, however, which God can approve. Those who are seeking to be in harmony with Him to the best of their ability, who are walking in the ways of righteousness, and at the same time are trusting in the precious blood of our Redeemer—such are spoken of as righteous. Of these it is said, "Blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness; for they shall be filled."—Matthew 5:6.

This class, however, shall have afflictions. The Scriptures tell us that all who will live godly lives shall suffer. (Acts 14:22; 2 Timothy 3:12; Romans 5:3-5.) The reason why this is true is that the world is traveling in the opposite direction to righteousness—in the way of selfishness and gratification of the flesh. We read, "If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." (1 John 2:15.) This is especially true of the Gospel Age, when some are following in the footsteps of the Master. It was also true of the Jewish Age, when some were seeking to walk in the way of righteousness. The Lord delivered them out of their afflictions, not in the sense of shielding them from trials, but in that of not permitting them to be overcome by their difficulties.

The Ancient Worthies fully appreciated the Divine favor exercised in their behalf, and took joyfully the spoiling of their goods, in order that they might have the continuance of that favor and larger blessings by and by. God delivered them out of their trials and difficulties by not permitting these to overcome them. This was also true of our Lord, and is true of the Church as well. The Lord delivers us out of our trials and difficulties, so that mentally we are not oppressed by them in the same way as are others. He will sustain and support us in our experiences and will eventually deliver us by giving us a share in the First Resurrection.

The sons of God by adoption are, during the Gospel Age, especially beset by trials and difficulties. If they should fall, however, the fact that they have stumbled will not make them feel like going back into sin, if their hearts are of the right stamp. On the contrary, they will feel like St. Peter, who, when others were stumbling, said, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." (John 6:68.) The true people of God have no desire to go to any one but Him. If they stumble, they recover themselves, avail themselves of His arrangements for forgiveness and press on. By these stumblings they learn of their own weaknesses, and then fortify themselves so that they may be strong in the Lord, and in the power of His might.—Ephesians 6:10.

A just man will not fall into sin. The very most that could happen to him would be to stumble. There are various causes for stumbling. But if the heart is right, the man will rise again; for the Lord will show him that he has made a mistake and will point out the way to him by which he may recover himself. If he is a lover of righteousness, he will desire to press on toward that which is right, just, approved of the Lord, even if he should stumble many times.—Psalm 37:23, 24; Prov. 24:16.

The Evidence of Favor With God

So far as our humanity is concerned, we are undone by reason of the fall. It behooves us, then, to be very humble, to feel our own littleness, our own fallen condition. It becomes us to be very contrite, very much in opposition to sin, to feel that sin is the great blight upon the whole race, and that God will not be in harmony with anything except that which is righteous and holy.

All, therefore, who would be in harmony with God must be repentant in respect to their own shortcomings and must be appreciative of His lofty standards—His holy standards. He, in turn, informs these that they have His sympathy, and that they shall have His succor. He appreciates the attitude of mind in which they are; and therefore, as our text tells us, He is ready to revive the spirit of the humble and contrite ones. To such He will show His salvation; to others He will not.

Only the humble-minded can really appreciate their own condition. God not only will revive their spirit, but is willing to lift them up and to make them again sons of God, with all that this implies of blessing. He has this attitude toward the humble and contrite in the present time, and He has **always** had this spirit toward the humble and contrite ones. Throughout Christ's reign this humble class will have His favor and blessing. Only the humble and contrite ones have the opportunity of becoming joint-heirs with our Lord.

God resists the proud. To the humble He gives grace, and opens the eyes of their understanding. They become His children because they are in the attitude to receive His blessings and to be guided by His instruction. The text applies not only in the present time, but will have an application in the next Age. "Go through, go through the gates; prepare ye the way of the people; cast up, cast up the highway; gather out the stones; lift up a standard for the people." (Isaiah 62:10.) These words are all intended to indicate the preparations for the incoming Age. There is no provision for the proud, none for the haughty, none for the self-conscious—but all for the humble-minded.

If God has these blessings in store for the humble only, and if the humble are few in number at the present time, what of the others of humanity? God is allowing now a humiliating influence to work with people, which should teach them humility and lead them to be contrite of heart. But much more will this be the case in the next Age. "When Thy judgments are in the earth, the inhabitants of the world will learn righteousness." (Isaiah 26:9.) All the blessings will be upon the contrite and humble. And this will be so markedly before the attention of the people that all will know a change has taken place. —Z. '13:115, 116.

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True honor, true blessing, true prosperity, cannot be found in opposition to the Divine arrangements.—Z. '15:90.

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After the city was given up the temple was **cleansed**: so now the temple class must be cleansed: every selfish, carnal thought and all worldliness must be cast out, that the temple may be clean, the dwelling place of God's holy Spirit—the temple of the living God.—B. 239.

Keeping the Body Under

"I therefore so run, not as uncertainly; so fight I, not as one that beateth the air."—1 Cor. 9:26.

THE Apostle Paul had definite knowledge as to what constitutes the prize. He was not uncertain about it; it was not a question with him as to its being one thing or another. St. Paul knew that the "high calling in Christ Jesus" is that we may be heirs with him, if we suffer with him—that we shall be with him in glory. Neither was the Apostle uncertain as to the terms and conditions of the race. He knew that they were even unto **death**; and that if he should seek to save his life he would lose it. Neither was he uncertain as to his own determination. He knew positively that he had entered the course. He was not of those who merely say, "I hope to do so some time." He had made with the Lord his covenant of sacrifice unto death.

Nor was the Apostle uncertain as to his opportunity to gain the prize. He knew that it remained with **him** to will and to do in harmony with God's good pleasure. He knew that nothing impossible was required of him in this race; that the terms and conditions of the race include "grace to help in every time of need"; and that this grace and help would come from the Lord. Hence, the Apostle's expression that, for the runners in this race-course, there was **no uncertainty, from first to last.**

Thus it may be with all under the guiding eye of the Great Redeemer. "If ye do these things, ye shall never fall, for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ."—2 Pet. 1:10, 11.

"I Keep My Body Under and Bring It Into Subjection"

The Apostle tells us that he **kept his body under,** lest, having preached the good tidings to others, he himself, should be a castaway. "I keep my body under, and bring it into subjection, . . . lest I myself should be a castaway," he declares. (1 Cor. 9:27.) One translation has this, "I brow-beat my body"; that is to say, I use coercive measures upon my body.

The body originally belonged to the natural man, the natural will. When the old will gave place to the new will, the latter became the owner of the body. The new will cannot properly be served by the old body, because the new mind is perfect and the body imperfect. When the new mind, the mind of God, the mind of Christ, therefore, takes into possession the mortal body, it has more or less difficulty. The mind is not suited to the body, nor the body to the mind. It is the work, therefore, of the new will to show its obedience to the Lord, its full loyalty to the Divine will, even though the body should be, in some respects, treated shamefully, its claim, **its supposed necessities,** etc., being ignored.

Not only are we all thus to mortify and brow-beat the body, but, additionally, we are to bring it into subjection. We are to make it serve the New Creature. The Apostle says, "But if the spirit of him that raised up Jesus from the dead dwell in you, he that raised up Christ shall also quicken your mortal bodies by his spirit." (Rom. 8:11.) The holy Spirit, which comes to us more and more as we feed upon the Lord, assists us to conform our lives to his will, and also quickens or makes alive our mortal bodies to the service of the Truth.

There are not two creatures, but one; we cannot be two creatures at once. It is not until the old creature submits and we are transformed, so far as the will is concerned, that we become New Creatures, so that, henceforth, we really are New Creatures. But the New Creature has not its new body as yet. In our text the Apostle evidently refers to the New Creature, the New Man. There is an outward man, which the world may think is the individual, but in proportion as the outward man is brought into subjection and service, the New Creature is growing stronger, until eventually, with the death of the human body, God will give the New Creature a new body, in the resurrection. Then the New Creature will be satisfied, when it shall be found in his likeness.

There is a tendency for the body, the flesh, to arise from its condition of reckoned deadness. Hence the New Creature needs to be continually on guard in the good fight of faith. These battlings of the new mind against the flesh are a "good fight," in the sense that they are fightings against sins and weaknesses that belong to the fallen nature. The entire course of the New Creature is the course of faith. It would be impossible for one to keep up this battle against the flesh and its propensities and desires, unless he exercise faith in the promises and in the Lord as his Helper.

The Apostle Had No Thought of His Coming Short

There is another passage in which St. Paul says that we should "fear lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of **you** should seem to come short of it." (Heb. 4:1.) He had no thought of coming short of it **himself,** but he urged those to whom he was writing to make their "calling and election sure."

It will be a great help to the overcoming of the weaknesses of the fallen nature to have rightly made a full consecration of the will, a full enlistment of every power and talent of mind and body to the service of the Lord. He who takes this proper view of his consecration to the Lord and of his enlistment in the Lord's army, realizes that he has nothing more to give to the Lord. Hence, whatever struggle of the will he may have had, is all ended when he has finally decided to give himself to the Lord. How important it is, therefore, to realize that the service is until **death,** and that there is no room even to consider any suggestion to withdraw and cease to fight the good fight of faith!

We are to remember that it is **not the flesh,** the old creature, which has entered the School of Christ, and is under instruction and preparation for the Kingdom, for "flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God." (1 Cor. 15:50.) Our acceptance of the Divine call to the spirit nature means, not only the renunciation of the earthly nature in **every sense of the word,** but also our begetting as New Creatures, "sons of God." The New Creature, the new mind, the new will, is in the School of Christ, to be perfected, to be brought into full accord with the Divine will, to become a copy or likeness of the Lord. We shall never succeed in bringing our **flesh** into absolute harmony with the Divine Law, because of its imperfections, inherited and otherwise. Hence, the necessity that it be covered with the robe of Christ's righteousness. He who looks for perfection of his flesh, and who rests his faith therein, must of necessity have a poor hope of ever attaining to the likeness of Christ—of ever becoming one of the predestinated class—of becoming "the image of his Son."—Rom. 8:29.

"We Do Those Things Which We Ought Not and Leave Undone What We Ought to Do"

In joining the Lord in faith and consecration we are proclaiming ourselves, **not** as graduates and heirs, but as **students,** disciples, who **desire to be prepared to inherit** "the things which God has prepared for them that love him." (1 Cor. 2:9.) If this thought be kept in mind as the divine teaching on the subject, it will tend to prevent our discouragement with ourselves when we find that, unavoidably, we do those things which we ought not to do, and leave undone those things which we ought to do; for in our flesh dwells no perfection.—Rom. 7:15, 18, 19, 25.

It is unnecessary for us to point out that the new mind, in proportion as it develops in likeness to the mind of Christ, will relax no efforts to keep the body under, with the motions of sin—to keep the will of the flesh dead. Surely no spirit-begotten son of God could allow sin to **reign** in his mortal body. Should sin to any degree control him, it will not be willingly, and hence could be but momentarily—until the new mind, the New Creature, seeing the uprising of the flesh, would conquer it, obtaining the promised grace and help in every time of need, from the heavenly storehouse of grace—Christ.

This thought, rightly entertained, will help true disciples to appreciate their own position, and not to be utterly cast down if overtaken in a fault of the flesh, so long as they realize that their **hearts** are not in sympathy with the sin and unrighteousness, but, on the contrary, in full sympathy with the principles and instructions of our Teacher, and longing to be cleansed and acceptable in his sight. Moreover, this thought will also help all such to exercise fervency of love amongst themselves, toward the brethren who similarly are **disciples, pupils in this School**—New Creatures, not according to the flesh, but according to the spirit of their mind. If, therefore, each should see blemishes in the flesh of the brethren, disapproved and striven against, he should remember that the evil which he sees is his brother's enemy, and not the brother himself, the New Creature—if so be that he gives us the assurance that his heart, his will, is in harmony with the Lord and his law of Love; and that he is daily seeking to fight a successful warfare against the weaknesses of the flesh.

"A Man Is Tempted When He Is Led Away of His Own Desires"

When studying this subject we must keep two facts in mind: (1), The Scriptures ascribe **no sin** to the New Creature, and (2), **no perfection in righteousness** to our fallen flesh. The New Creature (whose flesh is reckoned dead), which is represented by the new mind, and which is begotten of God, CANNOT SIN, for in its very essence, as the seed or germ implanted by the Truth—"the **spirit** of the Truth"—it is opposed to sin. This New Creature is so fully in accord with righteousness, so fully imbued with the spirit of the Lord, the spirit of holiness, that it delights in holiness and not in sin; and this must be the case so long as this begotten or Holy-Spirit-condition continues. "He that is begotten of God sinneth not [willingly—neither approves of sin nor takes pleasure in it]; because his seed remaineth in him" [the holy seed of the Truth, the spirit of Truth with which he was begotten]; "and that Wicked One toucheth him not."—1 John 3:9; 5:18.

We are not to suppose that every trial or difficulty which besets us is of the Devil; but rather to remember the Apostle's words, "A man is tempted when he is led away of his own desires and enticed." (James 1:13, 14.) Such temptations, then, are of the flesh, and the result of our being members of the fallen race, whose weaknesses and imperfections have been aggravated and intensified for now six thousand years. So, then, we are to recognize as among our chief foes our own inherent weaknesses and predisposition to things selfish, depraved, sinful.

The whole world, thus depraved and under the control of the spirit of selfishness, are largely, though unconsciously, the tools of Satan, "who worketh in the hearts of the children of disobedience." (Eph. 2:2.) To the children of God the world has become an enemy and a tempter by reason of the fact that we [the Church] have been "begotten again" to **new** hopes, new ambitions, **new** aspirations, new desires, which are along radically different lines from anything the world knows or has sympathy with.

"The Flesh Desires Contrary to the Spirit, and the Spirit Contrary to the Flesh"

Our begetting is of the Holy Spirit, and its tendencies are heavenly and spiritual, in harmony with righteousness and love. Yet it is only our **hearts** that are thus changed—our **flesh** is much more in harmony with the world than with the new order of things **established in our hearts and wills** by grace and truth, through Christ. Consequently, when the world, through the words or writings or general spirit of any of its children, comes into contact with the Lord's people, immediately they—the Lord's people—find that, although their hearts are loyal to the Lord and loyal to all the gracious things which he has promised them, and to the spirit of righteousness, love and truth, yet nevertheless, their flesh has an affinity for and an attraction toward the world, its views, its arrangements, its pleasures, etc.

For this reason the Christian is called upon to reckon himself **dead,** not only to sin, but to his own natural desires, appetites, inclinations, and also to the world, which is in harmony with sin and has perverted tastes and appetites. As the Apostle intimates, there is a constant battle between the New Creature, the new will, and the old creature, the fleshly and depraved disposition. He says, "The flesh desires contrary to the spirit, and the spirit contrary to the flesh." (Gal. 5:17.) And even though the advanced Christian has reached the place where he is enabled to reckon his flesh and will completely dead and buried, nevertheless, he has need continually to re-examine himself lest the flesh should become alive again. This was the Apostle's method. He says, "I keep my body under [dead, buried] and bring it into subjection [to the new mind]; lest having preached to others I myself should be a castaway." (1 Cor. 9:27.) This keeping of the body under, this watching it lest it should become alive again, is a constant necessity to those who would be overcomers; for it is the victory of the new mind, the new will, over the old will, the will of the flesh, that constitutes us victors, by developing in us strong, holy character—character like unto that of our glorious Lord and Redeemer.—Z. '11:136-138.

He Shall Sit as a Refiner

Sometimes as we look on, we gaze in wonder
Upon the dealings of our gracious God,
With those whom o'er and o'er his hand afflicted,
Who pass so often 'neath his chastening rod.

Pure gold and well refined, to our poor vision
These loved ones seem; and oft we wonder sore
Why souls who seem to us each day more saintly
Should by his hand be chastened more and more.

But the dear, loving Lord who tries the spirit,
Sees in them what no human eye can see—
A further fineness where his gracious dealing
Has formed the Christ within, in days to be.

As in a portrait by some cunning artist,
Which men call perfect—those who praise the skill
Of him who warms to life dull, senseless canvas,
Impatient that he labors at it still.
Labors, because before his inner vision
There floats an ideal he has not attained,
And in his heart he holds a steady purpose
To labor on until that point is gained.

So with these precious souls. Men see their graces,
So far exceeding those of common men,
And wonder why a God of loving kindness
Should chasten them again and yet again.

Nor will he stay his hand, though our impatience
Claim for these souls exemption from the rod,
Till, polished, perfected, refined, and holy,
Shines out from them the image of their God.

Art thou, beloved, one of this tried number?
Hold still, though furnace fires may hotter grow,
And when his work in thee is all accomplished,
The true life "hid with Christ in God" thou'lt know.—Z. '10:79.

"Within the Vail"

Homesick for heaven? and longing for its rest?
And does the way seem long that leads thee there?
Lift up thine eyes, the "vail" is growing thin
That separates us from its glories rare.
But yesterday a dear one passed beyond—
"Within the vail"—and entered into rest;
And as she passed we caught a radiant glimpse,
As when effulgent glory shineth in the west.

Another link is added to the chain
Of precious gold that draws us surely home,
Another strand is twined with the cord
Of love that holds us that we may not roam.
Yes, one by one his saints are passing o'er,
His loved from shadows into heaven's pure light,
Into the joy of his dear presence, where
They feel no more the darkness of earth's night.

But sweeter, grander still, "within the vail"
That almost grows transparent to our gaze,
We see our Master, our beloved Lord,
And lift to him our rapturous songs of praise.
So near we are, we almost catch the strains
Of heavenly music from celestial choirs.
Can we not bide with patience one more hour?
We've almost reached the goal of our desires!

Then let us not go mourning on our way,
But let our hearts be light, our faces glad,
These pressing burdens we shall soon lay down
Forevermore; why, then, should we be sad?
"A cloud of witnesses" behold our course
With interest intense, and shall we fail?
Our race is almost run;—Lord, nerve our hearts,
And scatter every doubt that doth assail.

So clarify our clouded vision, Lord,
So lift our thoughts and hearts to things above,
That earthly woes shall have no power to vex,
Nor separate us from thy grace and love.
While still we toss on life's tempestuous sea,
Shield from the rocks our tiny barques so frail,
Stand at the helm, and guide us safely till
We, too, are anchored safe "within the vail."
—Z. '08:92.

The Power of the Will—Self-Control

Romans 14:13-15:3.

"It is good not to eat flesh, nor drink wine, nor to do anything whereby thy brother stumbleth."—Verse 21.

TODAY'S Study is a part of the Apostle's discussion of law and liberty, custom and conscience, on questions that were prominent at the time of writing. With his accustomed vigor St. Paul is marking out the path of proper Christian conduct, in harmony with the second great commandment of the Divine Law—"Thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself." Although the lesson may be applied in a measure to every intelligent being, yet strictly, particularly, peculiarly, it applies to every consecrated member of the Church of Christ.

The Importance of Strong Will Power

All men have wills; and it is important that all should learn to use them. As a man willeth, so is he! The will-less, the supine, are not truly men and women. To be a hero in the strife one must have a strong will; and in proportion to its correctness will be the influence and value of the personality. Children should not be trained to have no will, but, contrariwise, to have a will submitted to the proper rulers and guides of life—to parents, to earthly teachers and, later on, to the Divine will.

In our Study the Apostle is addressing those who submit their wills to the Lord—those who have accepted the Divine will as instead of their own. The noblest and best of the people of God are those who have iron wills, which they have fully submitted to the guidance and direction of the Lord—through the Bible, the Holy Spirit and Divine providences. "The Father seeketh such to worship Him as worship Him in spirit and in truth."

Some are born with strong wills; others are naturally rather weak-minded. In the world the latter sink or swim, survive or perish, in the vicissitudes of life, often controlled by the law of supply and demand and the survival of the fittest. The inequalities of birth are frequently accentuated by life's experiences, and often disastrously. Some of the strong-willed become merchant princes, managers of large enterprises, etc., others become thieves, desperadoes, etc.—the outcome depending largely upon haphazard circumstances.

The only safe course for any mariner on the stormy sea of life is to take on board the great Pilot, the Lord Jesus Christ. While He will probably seldom guide into a haven of earthly riches or earthly popularity, nevertheless He will, if permitted, bring us safely to the desired haven. Under this Pilot the human will is like a strong vessel with mighty sails or a powerful engine. The greater the power, the greater the capacity and the more useful. The proper Pilot will guide us not only safely past the rocks of disaster and the shoals of sin, but into the haven of life, joy, peace and fellowship Divine.

Not merely the strong-willed need this great Pilot. The weak-willed naturally need Him just as much; for although they might not run upon the rocks with the same degree of force, and thus make equally bad shipwreck, yet they are quite as likely to be caught upon the shoals of sin and, in a purposeless manner, fail to achieve in life anything worth while.

New Creatures in Christ Jesus

Those who during the Gospel Age make a full surrender of their wills to the Lord and receive in return the begetting of the Holy Spirit are Scripturally termed New Creatures in Christ. (2 Cor. 5:17.) Their wills are brought into subjection to the will of God. The lessons of His Word and all the experiences of life under Divine provision are promised to work for their good—to strengthen their wills if too weak, to make them properly pliable if too rigid, and eventually to make of them the most that is possible in the present life and to prepare them for the life to come.

Such are addressed by St. Paul in today's Study. They are exhorted not to judge the brethren in the sense of condemning them, but rather to judge themselves, criticize themselves, make of themselves shining lights, and thus to help the brethren by setting before them and the world a noble example. Sooner or later all must give an account to the Lord. Therefore our judging of others is unnecessary. Hence if we have judged or criticized each other in the past, we should avoid so doing in the future and should criticize only our ownselves—our words, our deeds, our thoughts—that nothing in us shall put a stumbling-block in the way of another.

The ceremonial cleanness or uncleanness of food is nothing to the Christian, who is free from all law except the Law of Love. But this Divine Law controls, and forbids us to stumble or even to grieve a brother less well-informed than ourselves. How could one who is controlled by love either eat, drink, act or speak in a manner that would cause injury to another? It is good to have liberty, but let us so use it as not to injure those less advanced than ourselves.

The Call of the Gospel Age is to joint-heirship with Christ in His Millennial Kingdom. Those who are thus called are not under the bondage of the Jewish Law, but have greater liberty in Christ. But shall we say that the advantage of our relationship to the Lord as prospective heirs of the Kingdom consists chiefly in the liberty to eat and to drink what we please? Surely not! These are but the lesser advantages of our blessed relationship to Christ and the Kingdom. Our chief blessing consists in our justification and peace and joy in the Holy Spirit.

Let us appreciate these our chief blessings and privileges of the present time; for in so doing we shall be well pleasing in the sight of God, and men also will approve our conduct. So, then, let us follow after the things which make for peace, and the things whereby we may build one another up. Let us not even risk injury to the Cause of Righteousness and the work of God's grace in others by using our liberties in any manner contrary to their welfare. Rather let us count it a privilege to void our rights, if thus we can glorify God and bless our fellow men.

Faith vs. Condemnation

"The faith which thou hast, have thou to thyself before God." That is to say, our outward conduct need not necessarily show all the depth of our knowledge, faith and liberty. God knows the heart. He sees the progress which we have made; and He will be the better pleased with us if for the brethren's sake we do not declare all our liberties at a time and a place where the knowledge might prove injurious to others of His dear family.

The Apostle proceeds to point out that if we are critical in examining our own conduct and our own motives we may find therein something very similar in kind to that which we are disposed to criticize in others, although perhaps in relation to a different subject. (Verse 22.) For instance, whoever judges another allows, or concludes, that the other's conduct is inspired by pride, ambition, etc. If he were to turn his criticism upon himself, he might find something of the same kind in his own heart. Whoever concludes that his neighbor is a slanderer and condemns the neighbor for it should turn his criticism upon himself to see that his own words are always above reproach—never upon the slanderer. Happy and blessed the person who after careful self-examination finds himself to be entirely free from faults he discerns in others. Such are exceptional characters.

With the wrong conception before the mind, the Apostle's words in Verse 23 sound extremely harsh. To many minds laboring under the delusions of the Dark Ages the idea is conveyed that whoever defiles his conscience by eating meat which he mistakenly thinks to be unclean would thus be sent to an eternity of torture. But no such thought was in the Apostle's mind, nor could it be properly understood in his words. He there emphasizes the fact that any person eating meat, however clean, but thinking that in so doing he was committing a sin, would as a consequence be under condemnation for having violated his conscience, his judgment of the Lord's will; and that this condemnation of conscience would act as a barrier between himself and the Lord, who judges the heart and not merely the outward conduct. Such an alienation might ultimately lead to the loss of the great Prize of our High Calling, and thus lead one into the Great Company or possibly into the Second Death.

Practical Application of the Principle

The Apostle explains why this condemnation would hold, saying, "because he eateth not of faith"—not in harmony with his conscience; and whatsoever is not in harmony with faith and conscience is a sin. . . .

In the Body of Christ the members have their various inherited weaknesses, against which they must wage a life-long warfare; and sometimes these weaknesses are of such a nature as to interfere to some extent with the rights and the comforts of others as well as those of their possessors. Along this line the Apostle offers a word of counsel, saying, "We then that are strong ought to bear the infirmities of the weak, and not to please ourselves." Such patient, forbearing love is one of the most beautiful adornments of Christian character.

This does not imply, however, that we should not expostulate with such a one, and endeavor to help him to get rid of his infirmity. This we should do in the spirit of meekness and kindness, while we cheerfully endure the trial of our patience, not seeking to please ourselves, but rather to help a weaker brother or sister. "Let every one of us," as the Apostle counsels, "please his neighbor for his good, to edification"—not by simply ignoring his fault as though we considered it of no consequence, but by humbly and patiently submitting to the discomfort, even while kindly urging him to strive against it.

If this spirit prevails, there need be no division in the Body of Christ; for all the members will have a mutual care and a mutual love for one another—a care which seeks to encourage all that is good and to discourage all that is unbecoming; a love which throws its mantle over the deformity, and which endeavors to conceal a fault rather than to expose the weaker brother to the reproach of others. Thus in the true Body of Christ, which is knit together in love, if one member suffer, all the members suffer with him in proportion as they are more or less directly associated with him; or if one member be honored, all the members rejoice with him and to some degree share the honor—just as when in an earthly family one member rises to honorable distinction all the members partake of the honor and the joy.—Z. '16: 298, 299.

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In following the Master in the narrow way, we are not to murmur as we go, finding fault with its difficulties and its narrowness; nor are we to dispute respecting it, nor to seek to have any other way than that which Divine providence marks out before us. On the contrary, we are to realize and believe that the Lord knows exactly what experiences are necessary to our development in the School of Christ; that He is supervising our experiences for our highest good and His glory; that He is not forgetful of His promises to those who are His, but will, as He has promised, cause, **"all things** (that come to us in the line of faithfulness) to work together for good" to us. And even our blunders or stumblings, if properly received, will be overruled for our blessing.—Z. '15: 363.

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As day by day we lay down our lives in the Lord's service, it brings us more and more of the Lord's blessing, and we are more and more filled with His Spirit.

To render all that we have in the service of the

Lord is not only a most reasonable thing, but an offering far too small. It is far less than we would gladly render to Him who has manifested toward us such wondrous compassion and grace. When God has offered us so great a reward and blessing in return for our poor lives, we should feel that a refusal to accept this offer would be an indication not only of a pitiful lack of appreciation of Infinite Goodness, but also a weakness of mind. It would show a puerility of judgment which is unable to weigh and compare the trifling and transitory pleasures of self-will for this brief life with an eternity of joy and blessing and glory on the Divine plane, far above angels and principalities and powers and every name that is named, next to our glorious Lord and Head—a station so glorious, so exalted, that no human mind can grasp its infinitude. Let us be faithful—even unto death!—Z. '14:88.

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God's promises are true and for us. The world sees no cause for sacrificing in the present life, and they count us fools all the day long, as the Apostle says. But nevertheless in full assurance of faith, let us go on! Let us loyally press forward unto the end of the way, until we shall be joined to our great High Priest, and enter into His rest!—Z. '14:89.

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There is surely scope for conversation among Christian people on the subject of the riches of God's grace in Christ Jesus our Lord, expressed in the exceeding great and precious promises of the Divine Word. In these things we have indeed that which not only ministers grace to the hearer, but that which adds also to the grace of the speaker. It showers blessing on every hand so far as the New Creature is concerned, and assists in deadening the old nature with its evil desires, tastes and appetites.

This, evidently, is what the Apostle had in mind when he said that the Lord's people should "show forth the praises of him who called us out of darkness, into his marvelous light." And a heart filled with the spirit of love, the spirit of God, the spirit of the Truth, and overflowing with the same will be sure to bestow it upon others; for, "Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh"; "Blessed are the pure in heart."—1 Peter 2:9; Matt. 12:34; 5:8; Z. '11:63.

◇

While Ahab and the people rejoiced in Elijah's promises that the long hoped for rain would come, and went to their homes to rejoice and feast, the prophet remained upon the mountain to pray for that which God had definitely promised. Once he prayed, and sent his servant a distance to look for indications, but no answer. Again he prayed, and sent his servant again, but no evidence of response. After having been used of the Lord so mightily, in the matter of the sacrifice, Elijah might have gotten to feel too much of his own importance, if his prayer for rain had been too promptly responded to. Opportunity was given for fear and doubt, that the Lord would fail to keep his engagement, respecting the rain. But knowing the sureness of the Lord's word, Elijah did not doubt; he prayed again and again, and sent his servant each time to see what evidences there were of the Lord's answers to the prayers, until finally, when he had prayed for the seventh time, and inquired for a sign, the young man returned, saying that he saw a small cloud about the size of a man's hand. Then Elijah ceased his prayer, and realized, that the beginning of the fulfilment had come.

There is a lesson in this also for the Lord's people of today, that, as our Lord said: "We ought to pray and not to faint," not to grow weary in looking for, asking for and expecting the spiritual blessings which the Lord has **promised** us. Many of the prayers which fail of fulfilment, fail because the petitioners ask amiss; for things which God has not promised. Others fail, because of lack of faith. The prayer of faith is that which is offered, "nothing doubting," and whose hope is based upon a definite **promise** of the Lord. For instance, to us as New Creatures, the Lord has declared, "Your heavenly Father is more willing to give the holy spirit to them that ask him, than are earthly parents to give good gifts (of an earthly kind) to their children." He that seeketh the spirit of holiness, the showers of divine grace, findeth them. To him that knocketh, the stores of divine favor shall be opened.—Z. '98:205, 206.

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Those who accept of the favors of others, and lack the desire and fail to seek the opportunity to do as much or more in return, are certainly lacking the Lord's spirit in this particular.—Z. '98:232.

◇

Let us cultivate fervency, let us fan the flame of sacred love in our hearts by frequent reflection on the Lord's grace toward us—our covenant with him—and the exceeding great and precious promises of his word.—Z. '98:338.

◇

The spirit of liberty is a part of the spirit of the Lord, the spirit of the truth, and no Christian can too highly appreciate this liberty, nor too faithfully maintain his hold upon "the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free," nor too carefully avoid any "yoke of bondage." But this is made one of the Adversary's strong points of attack—**liberty.** He even used this argument upon our dear Redeemer—Use your liberty—Command that the stones be made bread, etc. The only safe or proper course for God's children is to walk carefully in the footprints of our Redeemer and Forerunner, Christ Jesus, and to avoid every appearance of evil—avoid the use and exercise of liberty where there would be the slightest danger of being led into temptation and into sin.—Z. '98:340.

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In our journey through life, almost daily we come to places and circumstances which, wrongly received, may change our entire course from fellowship and relationship to God to sin and opposition to him. What Christian has not realized certain crises in his life in which two voices seemed to speak to him; the one favoring humility and obedience to God at any cost; the other urging self-will backed by pride? If we are advanced Christians, who through numerous victories have gained a position where such besetments are rare, **we still need to be on guard** and to remember that we have a very wily Adversary, that we have the treasure of the new mind in an earthern vessel, and that in our flesh dwelleth no perfection. These recollections should make us very humble, and lead us to cling closely to the Lord, and to fear and abhor any attitude of conduct and even of thought that would in any measure seem to antagonize the divine will. Even if the Lord's favor seemed to be passing from us to another in certain respects, we should follow the course of Jonathan and know for a certainty that it would be folly to battle with God, for no blessing could possibly lie in that direction.—Z. '08: 265.

TRIALS PROPORTIONATE TO STRENGTH

A metallurgist tries his metal—proves it. He tests it, to separate the dross from it. After he has separated some of the alloy, he puts in another flux, to remove other dross; and then another flux, etc. So the Lord is taking away our dross. He does not take away all of the dross of our flesh; for it is the New Creature that is being perfected. As the dross in our minds becomes apparent to us, we as New Creatures will more and more co-operate with God in its elimination.

So the Lord's people are to be more and more sanctified through the Truth. The word **sanctify,** then, conveys the thought of making saintly, holy. Every day of our lives should make us more sanctified—more fit for God's service in the future.

It is not necessarily true that the one having the most trying experiences would have the most dross. Our Lord Jesus had more trials than any of His followers, and He was perfect. As St. Paul intimates, these trials work out for us "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." And the brightness of our **future** will depend upon the heart-development and character-development attained **now.** Our Lord Jesus will have the highest position because of greatest faithfulness under trials. Some of the Lord's brethren will have high positions because of having proved faithful under great trials. These trials are to fit us for a high position, both in the present life and in that which is to come.

"Yes, in God's furnace are His children tried;
  Thrice happy they who to the end endure!
But who the fiery trial may abide?
  Who from the crucible comes forth so pure
That He whose eyes of flame look through the whole,
  May see **His image** perfect in the soul?

"Not with an **evanescent** glimpse alone,
  As in that mirror the **Refiner's** face;
But, stamped with Heaven's broad signet, there be shown
  Immanuel's features, full of truth and grace;
And round that seal of love this motto be—
  'Not for a **moment,** but **eternity.**' "

—Z. '13: 294.

The followers of Jesus who would share with him in his Kingdom will need to be very merciful. As the kings and priests of the Millennial Kingdom they will have to deal with the poor, groaning creation, uplifting the willing and obedient out of their sinful and degraded death condition—up to righteousness, perfection, eternal life. Only the merciful of heart could be properly entrusted with such a work. (1 Cor. 6: 2.) This lesson, therefore, all the followers of Jesus must learn—to be merciful.

Their first lesson must be concerning their own imperfection and their own need of Divine mercy. This lesson needs to be continually impressed until it becomes a fixed element of character—loving-kindness. Hence our Lord's declaration, "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your heavenly Father forgive you your trespasses." Again he tells us to pray, "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive those who trespass against us." Consecrated believers, with all their past sins forgiven, unwillingly trespass against the perfect Law of God by word or thought or act daily, because they have the treasure of the new mind in the imperfect earthern vessel. These trespasses should be daily acknowledged and forgiveness asked for them through our great Redeemer-Advocate. But to impress upon us as a part of our character this essential element of mercy, the Lord declines to forgive our trespasses against his law, unless we exercise this spirit toward our fellow-men. "Blessed are the merciful, for they shall obtain mercy," and thus be enabled to make their calling and election sure—to a place and a share with their Redeemer in his Kingdom.—Z. '10: 56.

"MY CUP OF THE NEW COVENANT"

The cup is not ours, but the Lord's. The life or sacrifice symbolized by the blood is not ours, but the Redeemer's. We are merely given the privilege of drinking it, partaking of it. The blood of Jesus could have sealed the New Covenant between God and Israel, and on behalf of all mankind through Israel by the New Covenant, without being offered to us at all. The offering to us of the privilege of participation in the cup of Christ's sufferings and death is therefore not to indicate that it was insufficient nor that we could add anything to it. It illustrates the grace of God—that he is willing to receive us and make us joint-heirs with our Lord and Savior, if we have his Spirit. The Spirit which actuated Jesus was a spirit of devotion to the doing of the Father's will—to the smallest detail, and even unto death.—Z. '10: 116.

Eighteen centuries ago, when the Samaritans refused to sell bread for our Lord's company, the Apostles James and John in their loving zeal for the Master, said, "Lord, Wilt thou that we command fire from heaven" to destroy these men and their city? But Jesus rebuked them, saying, "Ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of. The Son of Man came not to destroy men's lives, but to save them."—Luke 9: 54-56.

These words are to be the guide of all the Lord's followers today, as well as before. We are not to render evil for evil, nor slander for slander, but, contrariwise, are to speak kindly, lovingly, generously, of those who, as foretold, will say all manner of evil against us falsely for Christ's sake—because we are his servants and representatives. And the more prominent our position, the more virulent will be their attacks. If we can remember that they are deluded and that the attacks are really from the Adversary, it will help us to feel kindly, sympathetically toward them, instead of maliciously and hatefully.—Z. '10: 4.

Old Corn Gems

NUMBER SIXTY-FOUR

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Bitter Waters, Then an Oasis

(Exodus 16:2-15.)

"Jesus said unto them, I am the Bread of Life."—John 6:35.

REALIZING their deliverance from bondage, and the Divine Power exercised in their behalf in the overthrow of the Egyptian army, the Israelites were joyful. Moses, their great leader, composed a poem of much force and beauty and of recognized high standard. The men chanted it after Moses; and the women under the leadership of Miriam, the sister of Moses and Aaron, took timbrels, or tambourines, and joined in a refrain, or chorus, their bodies swaying and their feet moving rhythmically in what is described as a dance:

> "Sing ye to the Lord [Jehovah];
> For He hath triumphed gloriously."

Singing songs of praise constitutes one of the most interesting and most profitable methods of worship. But we may be sure that they are acceptable to God only as they come from the heart and truly represent its sentiments. We fear, alas, that many hymns, like many prayers, never go higher than the heads of the offerers; indeed, we have sometimes feared that careless, irreverent singing might really be resented by the Lord as profanity—taking His holy name in vain. If so, the results would be of course the very reverse of a blessing, and that in proportion as the singer comprehended the impiety of his course. "The Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh His name in vain."

We do not mean by this that any unjust or cruel torments, future or present, would be the penalty, but we do believe that such a course reacts upon the irreverent heart to make it colder, more indifferent, and less susceptible to the influence of the Divine Message of grace. Ah! if all Christians sang with the spirit and with the understanding also, and if none others sang hymns, the earthly sounds might be more discordant than they are; but their Heavenly echoes and fragrance would be the more acceptable to God.

The journey toward the Land of Promise began. At length, fatigued and thirsty, they came to a fertile spot, where there was an abundance of water, but alas, it was bitter, or brackish! The disappointment was great. The song of reverence was forgotten; the mighty power of Jehovah in bringing them through the Red Sea was forgotten; even the taskmasters of Egypt were forgotten. The people murmured against Moses for bringing them away from the fertile fields of Egypt and its abundance of good water. They declared that it would have been better if they had remained in Egypt, or even if they had died there. They declared that Moses and Aaron had misled them into leaving the land of plenty, and had brought them into the wilderness, to die there of hunger and thirst.

The Lord's Wisdom guided Moses to a certain kind of tree, which, put into the water, made it sweet and palatable. Moses explained to the people that in murmuring against him they were really murmuring against God, for he was merely God's agent in the matter. A further journey for a season, and they were far from the bitter waters—at Elim, a delightful spot, where they rested and were refreshed.

The Scriptures explain that God had a special purpose and object in this leading of Natural Israel. He was teaching them lessons which would be helpful to them and, if rightly received, would prepare them, through faith and obedience, for Canaan. "And thou shalt remember all the way which the Lord thy God led thee these forty years in the wilderness, to humble thee, to prove thee, to know what was in thine heart, whether thou wouldst keep His commandments, or no."—Deut. 8:2.

The lesson to Spiritual Israel is a still more important one. If the Natural Israelites needed heart development and faith as a preparation for the earthly Canaan, how much more do Spiritual Israelites require for the Heavenly Canaan, toward which they journey from the time they leave Egypt—the world, and its bondage to sin! Can we wonder, then, that God permits many trying experiences to come to Spiritual Israel—trials of faith and of patience, "bitter waters"?

Any saint of God may have tears in the trying experiences of the journey in the narrow way, but none is excusable for murmuring. Rather, each should say with the Master, "The cup which My Father hath poured for me, shall I not drink it?" To those who approach the springs of bitterness with the proper faith in God as did Moses, the Lord makes known precious promises, which

> "Steal the Bitter from Life's Woes."

As the Israelites were led from the bitter waters to Elim and its rest and shade, so God's Spiritual Israel are not tempted and tried above what they are able to bear. With every temptation the Lord provides a way of escape, when frequently He revives the souls of His saints by granting them seasons of refreshing and comfort, preparing them for their trials in the wilderness state of the present life.—1 Corinthians 10:11-13; Z. '13:217, 218.

"My times are in Thy hands; my God, I wish them there"—that expresses it beautifully, does it not? We wish to have the Lord's will done in respect to the time of our change, and in respect to all we enjoy together daily—it is all committed to Him. Our wills are entirely dead. His will is to rule in your body and in mine, and in all of us.—Z. '15:216.

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The good works, the great works of God to some extent, are most abundantly manifested in this "New Creation," the Church.—Z. '08:376.

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OLD CORN GEMS

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"And they did eat of the OLD CORN of the land on the morrow after the Passover . . . and the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the OLD CORN of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year." Joshua 5:11-12.

A SAFE RULE

"WHERE A BROTHER GIVES AN INTERPRETATION OF A SCRIPTURE WHICH DIFFERS FROM THAT GIVEN BY BROTHER RUSSELL, AND BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION SEEMS REASONABLE AND IN HARMONY WITH THE PLAN OF GOD, THEN WE BELIEVE IT A SAFE RULE TO FOLLOW BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION, FOR THE REASON THAT HE IS THE SERVANT OF THE CHURCH, SO CONSTITUTED BY THE LORD FOR THE LAODICEAN PERIOD; AND THEREFORE WE SHOULD EXPECT THE LORD TO TEACH US THROUGH HIM. WHERE THERE ARISES A DOUBT IN THE MIND AS TO WHICH INTERPRETATION IS CORRECT, THEN IT IS ALWAYS SAFER TO RESOLVE THAT DOUBT IN FAVOR OF BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION. WE BELIEVE SUCH TO BE IN HARMONY WITH THE LORD'S WILL." Z. '18:51.

"Choose Ye This Day"

Mark 15:1-15.

Golden Text:—"Then said Pilate to the chief priests and to the people, I find no fault in this man."—Luke 23:4.

HOW MUCH depends upon our proper decision of the questions of life as they come before us day by day is well illustrated in this lesson. When our Lord and the eleven apostles left the upper room for the garden of Gethsemane, Judas—who earlier in the evening had reached a decision—had left their company to conspire with the chief priests, etc., and to guide their followers and servants to where Jesus could be apprehended quietly in the night, without the knowledge of the multitude in the city at that time for the Passover occasion. For the friends of Jesus, it was anticipated, might arouse a commotion amongst the throng of people, which might make the religious rulers of the Jews appear to be seditious, the Romans always being very much alert at such times for the suppression of any indications of revolt against the Roman authority. Judas doubtless had already conferred with the chief priests, and was probably present at the Passover Supper, partly for the purpose of learning the direction which Jesus and the others would take after the Supper. Our Lord's words to him, "What thou doest do quickly," seemed to imply that the matter was already arranged, and that Jesus by supernatural power was aware of it. That was the moment of final decision for Judas. He was a money lover, and decided to sell his Lord for money. Perhaps indeed he surmised that Jesus could deliver himself, and possibly he thought to gain the money without our Lord being injured; but in any event it shows a baseness of character and willingness to do evil for selfish reasons that remind us very much of the Prophet Balaam, who so greatly desired Balek's rewards of iniquity.

Bartering the Truth for Pottage

This matter of selling the Lord for money cannot be practised today in the same manner in which Judas practised it, yet we believe there is somewhat of the same ignoble spirit manifested by some in our day. It perhaps does not go to the same extent, but it is of the same kind, and who knows but that under favorable conditions it might be willing to go to the same length? We refer to some who are willing to sell the Truth for financial profit, for social advantage, for money; and others willing to sell the members of the Lord's body as Judas sold the Head, for earthly advantage, to deliver one another up to evil, to assist in bringing evil, tribulation, adversity, reproaches, etc., upon the members of the body of Christ. Yet with each of these, as with Judas, there was a time when they were perfectly innocent of such base ingratitude and wicked designs; there was a time when neither self-love, nor money love, nor any other consideration would have moved them to do injury to members of the anointed body. Let us beware of the little things which, like a switch upon a railway, turn a train into an entirely different track, and may let us off far from the goal we at first desired to reach. We cannot be too careful in the way we meet the trials and testings of character which come to us daily, and whose determination means so much to us respecting the present and the future life.

Our Lord, as he went with his disciples from the upper room and crossed the brook Cedron to the Mount of Olives, to the garden of Gethsemane, was likewise entering—a trial. His trial was from the opposite standpoint to that of Judas: his hour was fully determined, his consecration was completed, he wavered not in respect to the work he had come into the world to accomplish, he had no thought of anything else than dying for our sins. But as he stood upon the brink of death and realized that in a few hours the whole matter of his consecration, his "baptism into death," would be "finished," two matters presented themselves forcefully to his attention. One was that he perceived clearly that his arraignment would take place before the Roman tribunal—that his death would be according to the Roman form, by crucifixion—that, in order to secure his condemnation by the Roman government, the chief priests and scribes, his enemies, would misrepresent his character and teachings, and that his record before the world would stand as that of a blasphemer against God and an evil worker amongst men.

We have no doubt that there are characters in the world who would measurably gloat over an opportunity to suffer as outlaws and desperadoes; they would feel themselves more or less heroes, and would be regarded more or less as heroes amongst their own class ,similarly depraved in mind. But for those of more refined temperament—for the upright and honorable and pure in design—to pass through the same experiences would be a terrible ordeal. We may well imagine that our dear Redeemer, perfect, and with sentiments not in the slightest degree degraded, would feel the shame and ignominy of his position in such circumstances more than any of us could do. It was this shame, this reproach of being executed as a blasphemer against God and an injurious person amongst men, that we believe our Lord referred to as the cup which he prayed might, if possible, pass from him, saying at the same time, "Nevertheless, not my will but thine be done."

"Of the People There Was None With Him"

That sad hour in Gethsemane's garden, his disciples asleep, unable to appreciate the situation as he did, was the most trying hour of our dear Redeemer's experience. Added to the cup of grief and shame and ignominy came the thought that it is written in the Law, "Cursed is every one who hangeth on a tree," and thus he would be held up and marked amongst all the people of God as being accursed. A further thought was: "Is it possible that I have failed to meet the entire demand of the Law perfectly? Is it possible that I have failed in some little particular, and that thus the curse of the Law of God is to rest upon me, and that I shall lose life entirely after having striven to do the will of the Father and the fulfilment of perfect manhood under the divine Law?"

The strain upon the nervous system became so intense as to produce a bloody sweat, a form of illness very rare indeed and yet not unknown to medical men. This was the greatest agony of all. If he had failed in the slightest degree he had no future, but all of his bright prospects of returning to the Father's love and favor and heavenly conditions by a resurrection would all be vitiated. The Apostle refers to this saying, how in the days of his flesh he offered up strong cryings and prayers unto him who was able to save him from [out of] death, and who was heard in that he feared. (Heb. 5:7.) He was heard in respect to that he feared: he was delivered from death by a resurrection. More than that, he was delivered from the fear of death, from all doubt as respected his faithfulness to the Father's will and his acceptance of the Father down to that very moment. An angel, a heavenly messenger, appeared and strengthened him, comforting him and assuring him of the Father's love and care, and that he was well pleasing in his sight. Such an assurance to the loyal heart of Jesus was all that was necessary. He could go through any experience courageously while confident that the Father was well pleased with his course, and that the result would be his reattainment of the glories he had left when he came into the world to be our Redeemer, and the attainment also of all the other joys set before him in the Father's promises. Here was a trial upon a great heart that resulted in great blessing to himself as well as to others. The result of his trial was the peace, joy and confidence which, during that night and the next day, kept him the most calm of all, even to his dying moment, and which, as the Apostle declares, led to his glorification in the resurrection, and which eventually shall bring blessings to every member of the human family in the lifting of the curse, the right to lift which was secured by his faithfulness even unto death.

Betrayed by a Professed Friend

Presently Judas arrived on the scene with a company of the high priest's servants—not followers in the ordinary sense of the term, but court followers, resembling more the police of the present time. Some of them carried swords and some carried clubs, as our Lord's language to them indicates. Peter and another of the apostles had swords with them—a not unusual matter in those times, though unusual for the apostles, as the context shows. They doubtless had the swords with them to demonstrate that our Lord was not taken contrary to his own will. He had with him eleven able-bodied men, willing to lay down their lives at his command in his defence. One of these, Peter, drew his sword and smote off the ear of the high priest's servant, and doubtless the defence would have been carried on vigorously if our Lord had said the word, or rather had he not interfered by intimating to Peter that what he had done was enough. He bade him put up his sword—he was not to battle for his Lord with carnal weapons—and meantime healed the wounded ear. Our Lord, in surrendering himself, stipulated that his apostles were not included in the arrest.

Thus awakened, surprised, dismissed by the Lord, his disciples saw him taken from them, and were bewildered and confounded, notwithstanding our Lord's words to them on several occasions previously, intimating that some such calamity might be expected. It was a trial to them at the time, as the Master had already intimated, saying, "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation." They had not sufficiently appreciated his words, had slept while the trial hour was coming on, and were, therefore, the less prepared for it.

Our Lord, his hands bound, was led away to Annas and Caiaphas. Although it was night time, about one o'clock some of the chief officers of the Jews and the Sanhedrin had gathered, being informed that the arrest would take place that night, that one of his disciples would pilot the officers to take him, and the matter was urgent, so that his death could take place as quickly as possible on the next day, before the people in general learned about the matter and before the Passover week would begin. It was not lawful to try a man for any capital offence between sundown and sunrise, and hence this trial was in one sense an informal one—it would be required to be ratified by the Sanhedrin after sunrise. They were willing, however, to come as near as possible to breaking the Law that thus they might accomplish their purposes.

The Vile Charge of Blasphemy

As he stood before the high priest, and as his enemies brought witnesses and the trial progressed, our Lord may be said to have made no defence; it would have been useless anyway, as they were intent on finding a charge of some kind—they had murder in their hearts. The charge they sought to establish was blasphemy, one of the few charges the penalty of which under the Law was death, and it was his death they wanted. The blasphemy against God was declared to be proven in that he claimed to be the son of God, and blasphemy against the Temple was claimed to be proven in that some had heard him say that if the Temple were destroyed he could rear it again in three days. A decision was reached, but nothing could be done until daylight. Meantime the petty officers of the court spat upon the Lord, blindfolded him, and struck him, saying, "Prophesy, now, who is he that smote thee?" and thus the weary hours passed till daybreak. The Jews thought it a trial of the Lord, but his trial was all in the past. It was the trial of their high priests, of the court officers and of the members of the Sanhedrin and of the Jewish nation. It was a trial of whether they loved truth or a falsehood, righteousness or unrighteousness. They decided for unrighteousness.

Meantime the Apostle Peter was having a great trial, too. He had gained access to the outer room of the court and could probably hear or see something from where he stood and warmed himself at the fire. The first instinct of nature, self-preservation, overpowered him. It flashed upon him that if he were recognized as one of Jesus' subordinates he might be treated in the same manner as the Master, and in his desire to avoid the troubles that had come upon Jesus he denied that he knew him, and on a second occasion of the same kind he even swore that he did not know him. Poor Peter! It was a time of severe trial, and, alas! he failed. How he might have gloried afterwards if he had suffered something for Christ's sake and for his acknowledgment of being his follower! But had he done so, all of the Lord's followers since would have lost a very valuable lesson conveyed to us in Peter's experiences.

Peter's weakness on this occasion, afterwards so bitterly lamented and acknowledged and forgiven, has in some respects been a great blessing to all of the Lord's followers as they found that they, too, had weaknesses, and that sometimes they were overtaken in a fault as was Peter. They have learned from Peter to weep bitterly for these shortcomings, and have not been utterly cast down when they have found that Peter was received again by the Lord and heartily forgiven, and that the lesson thus learned made a deep impression on his life and resulted evidently in his favor. It is related of Peter that ever after this he arose every morning at cock crowing, made a fresh remembrance before the Lord of his weakness on that occasion, and accepted divine forgiveness. It was a testing time to Peter, and so similarly testing times come to all of us. Let us see to it that under no circumstances shall we ever deny our Lord. More than this, let us remember that the Lord places himself and his Word and his brethren on a par, and assures us that those who deny his Truth deny him, and those who deny his Word of prophecy are thus denying him.

Treason Against Rome

With sunrise the Sanhedrin met officially, and, accepting the testimony of the high priest, that he had examined witnesses and that it had been proven that Jesus had blasphemed God and the Temple, the verdict was reached that he should die. Then, as related in our lesson, they held a private consultation respecting how they should present the matter before Pilate, the Roman governor. They well knew that he would pay no attention whatever to their charges of blasphemy and would tell them that was not a crime under the Roman Law. They determined that the charge against our Lord before Pilate should be treason against the Roman government. In support of this charge of treason they said that he declared there was another king besides Caesar, namely, himself, the Messiah; and to seemingly corroborate this they declared falsely that he had forbidden to pay taxes to Caesar's government, whereas when they tried to catch him on this very subject two days before he had answered to the contrary, "Render to Caesar the things that are Caesar's, and to God the things that are God's." Moreover, he had paid taxes himself, Peter being sent for the fish to pay the tax for them both. But this false allegation would seemingly prove the truth of the original charge of treason.

Now Pilate's time had come for trial. He stood as judge, and the principles of right and wrong, truth and untruth, righteousness and unrighteousness, in this case were for him to determine. What a wonderful chance he had! Suppose he had refused to connive at the malice of the high priest when he recognized that it was "for envy they had delivered him." Suppose that Pilate had dismissed the high priest and Sanhedrin and the multitude and had set Jesus free, and had cautioned them that if any of them did him injury they would be answerable with their lives! What a noble picture it would have been before the eyes of history! But, instead, his course and reputation have been anything but commendable and admirable. Nevertheless, while recognizing that he thus had a test and that he failed to take the noble part, we are far from sharing with the majority in their very ignominious view of this governor.

We are to remember that Pilate was neither a Jew nor a Christian, but a heathen man—without God and having no hope in the world. We are to remember that he did not believe in the Jews' religion, whatever he may have believed. He did not believe in Jesus, nor had he any respect for the Messianic promises. He was filling the office of governor as the representative of Caesar's government at Rome. He had his own pleasures and self-gratifications distinct from the Jews and their festivals, etc., for which he cared nothing. He was amenable not to our God, for he knew him not, but merely to Caesar, and Caesar expected nothing of him except that he would preserve the peace and quiet of the city and maintain the dignity and authority of Rome. Rome cared not if one or ten or hundreds of innocent persons were put to death, if only the peace of the country were maintained. It was, therefore, Pilate's first duty as Roman governor to keep the peace in Jerusalem.

Art Thou the King of the Jews?

From this standpoint we can say that Pilate's course was noble and just—though not the noble and just one which we would have preferred for him. Pilate did not readily accept the charges of the Pharisees: he knew them to be hypocritical, and really we may here say that the worst wickedness in the world at any time, at every time, in its history has been that form of wickedness which parades under the cloak of religion, which does evil in the name of that which is right, true, good. Pilate asked for specifications respecting the treason, and this seems to have surprised the chief priests, who presumed that their word would be taken on that subject without proof. If they thought a Jew had been worthy of death for treason then Pilate should certainly so suspect and so believe, for they were not supposed to wish the destruction of any fellow-Jew on such a charge. Pilate looked at Jesus and saw in him no criminal appearance, saw that he did not look at all like one who would become a leader of sedition; that, instead, meekness, gentleness, patience, long suffering, love, were marks of his features. Pilate inquired of Jesus respecting this charge, "Art thou the king of the Jews?" Our Lord's answer was not quite equivalent to yes, and yet it intimated that he did not wish to dispute the charge. To have attempted to explain the Kingdom of God under such circumstances would have been improper, for none there were prepared to hear and appreciate or understand; to have done so would have been in conflict with our Lord's own instruction on the subject, not to cast pearls before swine. Those present were not prepared to understand that the Kingdom would come a spirit Kingdom, that it would have earthly representatives, etc.

Meantime the chief priests accused him fiercely, Jesus saying nothing—"He was led as a lamb to the slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearer is dumb, so he opened not his mouth." He was not there to defend himself, nor to protest against his execution. On the contrary, he was there to sacrifice his life, to lay it down, to permit it to be taken from him without resistance. Pilate himself marveled that anyone could be so indifferent to the results of his trial. All this, however, proved the more conclusively that there was nothing dangerous to the interests of Rome in connection with our Lord's life or teachings: it all disproved what the chief priests were charging, and demonstrated that they had some ulterior malevolent spirit of opposition to Jesus.

Preferring Barabbas to Jesus

There had been a real sedition, a genuine movement against the authority of Rome, at a previous time, and Barabbas and others had been made prisoners on account of it. Some one in the crowd started a call on the governor to do as was his custom every year at this time—to release some prisoner as a matter of clemency and favor. Soon the whole mob took it up, and Pilate inquired, "Shall I then release unto you the king of the Jews?"—Jesus. His thought evidently was to arouse in them to some extent an enthusiasm in favor of his liberation of Jesus, for we read that he perceived that it was the chief priests and not the multitudes that were against Jesus. He hoped to turn the rabble to the side of Jesus and to release him on their request. But the chief priests, who had accused Jesus, stirred up the multitude to request the release of Barabbas, the seditionist, the rioter. One wonders that they were not ashamed in the presence of even a heathen governor to manifest their perfidy in this manner—to accuse Jesus of being a traitor to Rome and asking to have him crucified and in the same breath to urge the release of one about whose rioting there was no question.

Pilate evidently heard something said about Jesus' work being largely done in Galilee, and thought to be rid of the matter by turning the case over to Herod, the ruler of Galilee, who was present in Jerusalem at the time. He therefore sent Jesus bound to Herod, with the explanation that, as he was a Galilean, Pilate was pleased to acknowledge Herod and to submit the case to his adjudication. Really he was glad to be rid of the case, for he preferred not to put to death an innocent man, yet he perceived that the chief priests could make very violent charges against him if he refused to put to death one whom they charged with treason against the Roman government. At Rome such conduct would have the appearance of favoring rebellion; and if Pilate should reply that there was no danger of rebellion, that the man was merely a quiet, innocent man, they would have probably responded that he was entirely too particular anyway, that he should be prompt in the execution of anybody and everybody charged in the slightest degree with rebellion in word or act against the Roman power. Thus, no doubt, he would have lost his position and would have been degraded for the remainder of life. Pilate was in a very trying position.

Herod's Opportunity and Failure

The coming of Jesus to Herod meant a trial for Herod. How would he receive Jesus? What would be his conduct toward righteousness and truth and justice and purity and goodness? This is the same Herod who about a year and a half before had beheaded John the Baptist, and who, hearing of Jesus, had suggested that he might be a reincarnation of John. Herod, we are told, was glad to see Jesus and hoped to see him perform some miracle of which he had heard so much; but the Lord was absolutely silent before him, not a word had he to say before such a man. Such a course was probably the most striking rebuke he could have administered to Herod, and was entirely in line with the whole conduct of our Lord—his determination to do nothing that would hinder the accomplishment of that which he knew to be the divine purpose—his death that very day.

Finding that Jesus would not even reply for him, nor perform any miracles for his entertainment, Herod suggested to his men of war that they robe him as a king and have some sport with him, as it seems was a custom of that time in respect to criminals—the soldiers were granted opportunity to give them mock homage and then to buffet them, etc., before they were executed. This done to Jesus he was returned to Pilate. Herod in turn expressing his appreciation of Pilate's course, but declining to interfere in Pilate's territory. From that time Pilate and Herod were friends, though previously they had been adversaries.

"Do Nothing Against This Just Man."

The case returning to Pilate, and the chief priests evidently fearing some slip of their plans, were very persistent in demanding the death of Jesus and in inciting the multitude to clamor for it. Some six times in all Pilate declared the innocence of Jesus, yet under the circumstances already narrated he hesitated to absolutely refuse the demand of the Jewish priests and multitude: especially did he feel the point of the argument made by the priests. "If thou let this man go, thou art not Caesar's friend," which meant, You are an enemy to Caesar and to the government of Rome. Pilate realized that such a course would not be understood by his superiors, and hence he tried every method to get the Jews satisfied in the matter. One step in this proceeding was to order that Jesus should be scourged. He hoped that the scourging would satisfy his adversaries' thirst for blood. Meantime Pilate's wife sent a message to him urging that he do nothing against this man, for that she had had a dream in the night to this effect. Under the circumstances Pilate evidently did everything that could be expected of a worldly man in the times and under the conditions in which he lived. The only exception to such a procedure that we could expect would be on the part of a Christian, or of some one who under Christian influence had gained a much more than ordinary love for justice, and willingness to sacrifice every interest in its behalf.

It was in connection with his endeavor to free Jesus from those who sought his life that Pilate stood Jesus forth so that they might see him, exclaiming, "Behold the man!" The impression we get is that Pilate himself was struck with the quiet dignity of our Lord in his facial expression, in his composure under trying conditions. His words seem to mean, Look at the man you are talking about crucifying! Why, Jews, you have not such a man in all your land. I doubt if there is any man his equal anywhere! But it was all of no avail; the multitude had become excited and were clamoring for our Lord's blood. In the expressive symbolic language of the time, Pilate, before delivering Jesus for crucifixion, indicated that he was averse to the sentence they were compelling him to pronounce, and that wherever the responsibility lay he was not the guilty party. He did this by washing his hands with water in the presence of the people, exclaiming, "I am innocent of the blood of this just person."—Matt. 27:24.

The Result of These Trials—Retribution

What a number of trials, testings and provings we have found in this lesson—and now let us briefly glance at the results. Judas, as a result of failure in his trial, died soon by his own hand. Pilate, the unwilling instrument of the condemnation and not one hundredth part as guilty as the Jews, shortly afterwards lost his commission as governor and in despondency committed suicide. Annas, the high priest, was subsequently dragged through the streets, scourged and murdered. The multitude who cried out, "Crucify him!" and who in answer to Pilate's declaration that he was innocent of the blood of Jesus, declared, "His blood be upon us and upon our children," experienced a baptism of blood not many years after when the entire city of Jerusalem was a scene of most horrible atrocities, which culminated in the utter destruction of their city with great loss of life, in the overthrow of the entire Jewish polity in Palestine, and the scattering of the survivors amongst all nations and peoples. The curse they thus brought upon themselves still remains to some extent; his blood is still upon them, and from that day until the present time the Jews have suffered greatly; and although the divine disfavor has been passing from them as a nation since 1878, it will continue in some measure until nearly or quite 1914 (1918). The curse will be remitted because of its being forgiven through the grace of God in Christ.

On the other hand, note the blessings which came to those whose testings were received in the proper manner, demonstrating their loyalty to the Lord. Our Lord Jesus was highly exalted, far above angels, principalities and powers and every name that is named—because faithful unto death, even the death of the cross. Peter the Apostle, although partially overtaken in a fault, nevertheless through repentance and bitter tears was accepted back again to the Lord's favor, profited by his sad experience, and became one of the noblest of the apostles, one of the most honored, and is yet to be honored in the Kingdom as joint-heir with his Redeemer.

Think Not Strange Your Fiery Trials

We are not to expect similar trials, in all respects like those of our lesson, but we are to expect fiery trials, and we are to note that the results will be in accord with the manner in which we meet them. The lesson to us is that we should follow in the footsteps of Jesus and resolve to be faithful to our heavenly Father, to do his will at any cost, at any sacrifice of earthly interests—not grudgingly, but, as expressed prophetically of our Lord, "I delight to do thy will, O my God; thy Law is written in my heart." Another lesson is that if temporarily we should stumble in following the Master we must not be discouraged, but turn the failure and stumbling into a blessing by permitting it to bring us into closer relationship to the Lord and to make us more and more careful and more faithful in our walk with the Lord henceforth.

Some one has said: "This scene has often been alleged as a self-condemnation of democracy. **Vox populi, vox Dei** (The voice of the people is the voice of God), its flatterers have said; but look yonder. When the multitude has to choose between Jesus and Barabbas, it chooses Barabbas. If this be so, the scene is equally decisive against aristocracy. Did the priests, scribes and nobles behave any better than the mob? It was by their advice that the mob chose Barabbas." This is a very wise and a very truthful suggestion. The voice of the people can be relied upon in some matters, and, on the whole, the republican form of government is probably the best of any in the world for civilized peoples under present conditions; but as respects religious things the voice of the people is far from being the voice of God. On the contrary, the Apostle declared, "The world by wisdom knows not God." It must not, therefore, prejudice our judgments to find the popular voice against us. What we seek for and listen for is the voice of the Lord through his Word. With this let us be satisfied as was our Redeemer, content whatever lot we see since it is our God who leadeth us. It is possible that the closing scenes of the Church's experience may in some respects resemble that of our dear Redeemer; it is possible that some of the Lord's people may be branded as blasphemers and hailed before governments on the charges of preaching Christ as another King. Should it ever come to such a pass, we should have no doubt whatever respecting our position. It should be that of full confidence in the Lord, and thorough faithfulness to him, to his Word, and to all the brethren. Let us leave the outcome of these trials and testings in the hands of the Lord, assured by his Word that he will make these afflictions to work out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.—Z. '04:149-155.

"To Obey Is Better Than Sacrifice"

(1 Sam. 15:13-23.)

THE words of our caption, the Golden Text of this lesson, are the Lord's rebuke to King Saul by the prophet Samuel, in connection with the announcement that Saul, by disobedience to the heavenly King, had forfeited his privilege of representing him on the throne of Israel. The rending of the kingdom from the hands of Saul meant more than his own displacement: it meant that his son and successive heirs should not continue the Lord's representatives in the kingdom.

For a number of years Saul seems to have prospered fairly on the throne, and the people of Israel prospered with him. It was several years after his coronation that his first severe testing in respect to his obedience to the heavenly king came to him. At that time a war was instituted against the Philistines, who had been encroaching upon the Israelites to the east. Saul waited several days for Samuel to come to offer the sacrifices of the Lord previous to the beginning of the battle. Samuel was providentially hindered, and Saul, after waiting for a time, offered the sacrifices to the Lord himself, contrary to the arrangement, and then proceeded to battle, the result being a considerable defeat to his forces. Apparently he was not evilly intentioned, but lacked proper respect and reverence for the Lord and his arrangements. This may be said to have been the beginning of Saul's rejection by the Lord. Samuel's words were, "Thou hast not kept the commandment of the Lord . . . now thy kingdom shall not continue. The Lord hath sought him a man after his own heart."

The lesson of this incident is as applicable to spiritual Israel today as it was to Saul and natural Israel in their day—"Obedience is better than sacrifice." In how many ways we may see expressions of this same condition amongst many who profess the Lord's name today! Many are "workers" in the Lord's cause in the various denominations of Christendom, and many are their sacrifices of time and money; but inasmuch as they are not obedient to the Lord, they fail of the blessing they would have, and, indeed, in a considerable measure cut themselves off from greater privileges and opportunities. Yea, many of them, we fear, are cutting themselves off from the kingdom, from glory, and from joint-heirship with the Lord in that Kingdom. We should learn from this lesson, given us in Saul's experience, that our heavenly Father wishes us to be very attentive to his Word, and not to think for a moment that we can improve thereon, or that times and circumstances will alter the propriety of our obedience to him. Had Saul been obedient and the results disastrous, he would at least have had a clear conscience: he could have said that he had been obedient to God and was not responsible for the results. But if he had been obedient God would have been responsible for the results, and we know that divine power would have brought about the proper results. Let us apply the lesson to ourselves in respect to our daily conduct in every matter of life: let us hearken to the Word of the Lord and keep close to it, not fearing the results, but having faith that he who keeps us never slumbers nor sleeps and is too wise to err, as well as competent to meet every emergency that could possibly come upon us as a result of our obedience. . . .

Saul's next severe trial was in connection with the Amalekites—a nomadic and fierce people who, on several occasions, had done injury to the people of Israel. In sending the message the Lord gave special instructions that the Amalekites should be destroyed, saying, "Utterly destroy all that they have, and spare them not; but slay both man and woman, infant and suckling, ox and sheep, camel and ass." Without mentioning other of Amalek's transgressions, he specifies here that the destruction is on account of Amalek's opposition to Israel in the way when they came up out of the land of Egypt several centuries previously. . . .

Saul's error in this trial was his failure to carry out the command of the Lord explicitly. He slew all the Amalekites, old and young, except the king, whom he kept alive, possibly thinking to exhibit him in some kind of a triumphal display; but as for the flocks and herds, he consented with his people to spare all that were goodly and desirable—"The best of the sheep and of the oxen and of the fatlings and of the lambs, and all that was good, . . . but everything that was vile and refuse, that they destroyed utterly." (Vs. 9.)

It is at this juncture that the Prophet Samuel came to him and the colloquy of our lesson ensued. The general narrative—the indignation of Samuel and the Lord's positive announcement—clearly indicates that Saul had not misunderstood his instructions, but had with considerable deliberation violated them. Consequently we must understand his words addressed to Samuel to have been to a considerable extent hypocritical. He first salutes the Prophet with blessings, and assurances that he had performed the commandment of the Lord successfully. But immediately the prophet replies, "What means, then, this bleating of the sheep in my ears, and the lowing of the oxen which I hear? The prophet understood at once that the work of destruction had not been complete, that Saul and the people of Israel were anxious to take a spoil. This was wholly contrary to the Lord's direction. They were not to destroy their enemies to their own advantage, but simply to act as the agents of the Lord in thus executing his decree, the sentence of justice. They were not to take booty and thus to become like the nations about them—a robber nation, profiting by the troubles they inflicted upon the enemies of the Lord. This is in full accord with the Lord's character and the foregoing explanation of it.

Saul, seeing that the prophet was not likely to sympathize in any measure with his violation of the command, began hypocritically to represent that all those fine sheep and oxen had been captured from the enemy to be sacrificed to the Lord, and incidentally this would have meant a great feast for the Israelites, because the flesh of animals so sacrificed was eaten by them. Samuel stopped the king in his explanation and told him of the Lord's words of the night preceding (which, in Jewish counting, would be "this night," because their day began in the evening). The message of the Lord calls attention to the fact that Saul was humble when he was chosen as the Lord's representative upon the throne, and at that time he was very willing to give strict obedience to the heavenly voice, but the intimation is that now he had grown more self-confident and therefore less reliant upon the Lord and less attentive to the Lord's commands; getting into the wrong attitude of heart, he had failed to properly execute a very plain specific direction. Knowingly and in violation of the Lord's command he had the spoil separated, and spared the best when the Lord had commanded the reverse.

If, in applying the principles of this to the Lord's people of today, we think of the Amalekites as representing sins and of how the Lord's command comes to us to put away sin entirely, utterly destroying everything that is related to it, we may get a good lesson. Like Saul, many are disposed to destroy the vilest things connected with sin, but to save alive the king sin, merely making him a prisoner. Many are disposed, too, to seek out the things which they realize to be condemned of the Lord to destruction—such things as would be choice and desirable to their taste—and frequently, like Saul, they claim that even these sins of the less obnoxious kind are held on to for the purpose of sacrificing them and thus honoring God. How deceitful above all things is the heart! How necessary it is that all who would be in accord with the Lord should be thoroughly true-hearted, thoroughly sincere, and that under the Lord's direction we should seek to take away the life of every sinful principle, evil teaching, evil doctrines, evil engagements, unholy words and thoughts and deeds.

Saul sought to defend his course, to put as good a face upon the matter as possible and to lay the responsibility for the saving of the spoil for the sacrifice upon the hosts of Israel, who, with himself, were so desirous of offering sacrifices to the Lord. Samuel's answer is the pith of this lesson and contains its Golden Text. He clearly points out to Saul what the latter should have known, and what all should recognize, namely, that offering sacrifices is far less pleasing to the Lord than obedience to his Word. No one could offer an acceptable sacrifice to the Lord unless obedient in his heart and unless the sacrifice represented that obedience. So with the Lord's people today. It is not so much of ill-gotten wealth that we may sacrifice to the Lord; it is not so much the proceeds acquired directly or indirectly by wrong doing that we may sacrifice acceptably. Our sacrifice must be from the heart, and, first of all, must be the will. He who gives his will, his heart, to the Lord, gives all; he who gives not his will, who comes not in obedience of heart unto the Lord, can offer no sacrifice to the Lord that could be acceptable. "Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice," is a lesson which should be deeply engraved upon the hearts of all the sanctified in Christ Jesus. To have the spirit of obedience is necessary, too, and whoever has the spirit of obedience will not only obey the divine will, but will seek to know the divine will more and more that he may obey it. It is of this class that the Scriptures declare, "His word was found and I did eat it;" and again, in the words of our Lord, "I delight to do thy will, oh my God; thy law is written in my heart."

Saul had been very diligent in his opposition to witchcraft and idolatry throughout the land of Israel, and in so doing was accomplishing a good work in accord with the divine plan, the divine will; but the prophet calls his attention to the fact that his energy in such matters would not prove an offset to his deliberate wilful neglect of the divine injunction. The Lord's commands against sin and every evil thing are to be executed to the very letter, no matter how highly exalted the sin may be in dignity and place, and no matter how precious or valuable or desirable or toothsome the sin may be to our fallen natures. Though it be as dear as a right hand or as a right eye, there is no course open to the Lord's followers but to be obedient—even unto death.—Z. '03: 218-221.

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Permitting us to stumble may be his means at times for teaching us valuable lessons respecting our own weaknesses and our need to look unto him as our Shepherd as well as our Redeemer, and to feel our own weaknesses, that thereby we may become strong in the Lord and in the power of his might. —F. 161.

The Fruit of the True Vine

(John 15:1-12.)

Golden Text:—"Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit."—v. 8.

THE fruits of the Spirit are sometimes taken to be activities in the service of the Truth, as, for instance, the scattering of the Truth, the talking of the Truth. . . . These are sometimes considered the fruits which the Lord expects of the branches. Not so! The fruits are something nobler and grander than these things, and are described by the Apostle as the fruits of the Spirit. The Spirit of the Vine must permeate all the branches, and the fruit of the Vine must be in every branch. These fruits of the Spirit are enumerated—meekness, gentleness, patience, long suffering, brotherly kindness, love: if these things be in us and abound, says the Apostle, they make us to be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord and Savior.

These fruits are all one in some particulars: that is to say, the essence of proper Christian patience is love: the essence of hope and faith and joy is love for our Father, and our confidence in his love, as expressed in his promises to us. So the name of all these fruits and graces of the Spirit is expressed in the one word, Love. These are the fruits which must be found in every branch if it would retain its place as a branch and be of the glorified Vine by and by. Let us not deceive ourselves into thinking that other things will do, and that we may pass the divine inspection without these. The other things, the good works, the seeking of the Truth, etc., are only to be acceptable to the Father in proportion as they are the results of this fruitage in our hearts. The Apostle expresses this forcefully when he says,

If I should give my body to be burned and all my goods to feed the poor, and have not love, it would profit me nothing.

The same thought is true in regard to service to the Lord: if we should spend every day and every hour in work, if we should give all our money, or use ourselves in any way for the service of the Lord's cause, it would profit nothing unless it were the result of love in our hearts. We see, then, that the thought is that we must cultivate in our hearts the graces of the holy Spirit, meekness, gentleness, patience, etc., love, and that we must have these in abounding measure to be pleasing to the Lord, to bear "much fruit." The expression of these fruits, therefore, undoubtedly will be through various channels, perhaps of giving goods to the poor, perhaps of such faithfulness in the presentation of the Truth as might lead us to martyrdom, that our bodies might be burned. If the burning of the body or the loss of all our goods comes in such a course through our faithfulness to the principles of righteousness, through our love and loyalty to the Lord, then happy are we indeed. . . .

Fruits of Membership in the Vine

Our Lord proceeds to tell us what some of the fruits of this union with him will be:—

First, such may ask whatsoever they will and it shall be done unto them. There is only one condition or limitation, namely, that before they are thus prepared to ask they must see to it that they give attention to the Lord's word that they may ascertain what is his will and what they may ask according to his will. . . .

The second fruitage or result will be that the Father will be glorified the more in proportion as our fruit increases, and on these terms our discipleship shall continue, namely, that we shall habitually seek to know and to do the Father's will and to glorify and honor him by lives obedient to his will. Anything short of this would forfeit our discipleship. . . .

The third fruit or evidence of this membership in the Vine and of our continued growth as branches is stated in verse nine, namely, that as the Father loved the Lord Jesus, the Vine, so our Redeemer loves us, his branches or members. What a wonderful thought this is, that our Master has toward us the same kind of love that the Father has toward him! Could our faith always grasp this thought and maintain this hold, we should indeed have nothing to wish or to fear—our summer would last all the year. The next thought suggested is that having reached, having attained this high position in the Lord's favor, if we are his disciples and truly appreciate what he has done for us in this respect, we will desire to continue in his love. Next in order come the terms and conditions upon which we may continue in that love, namely, that we keep his commandments.

By way of showing us that this is not an unreasonable proposition, our Lord declared that these are the same terms on which the Father deals with him, namely, "Even as I have kept my Father's commandments and abide in his love." We cannot expect to abide in the Lord's love and be careless of his injunctions. The measure of our faithfulness to him will be indicated by our obedience to him, as the measure of his love for the Father was indicated by his obedience to the Father. The Apostle intimates this same thought and adds a little to it, saying, "For this is the love of God that we keep his commandments, and his commandments are not grievous." (1 John 5:3). It is not enough that we keep the commandments, but that we keep them lovingly and loyally, of good pleasure, that we do not consider them grievous but rather are to be glad to be in line, in harmony, with all the Lord's righteous provisions and arrangements. Let us all more and more seek this spirit of full heart-harmony with all the principles of righteousness laid down by our Lord Jesus—his commandments.

Our Lord's commandments are not the ten commandments of Moses, but more or less according to the standpoint of expression. They are less in the sense of requirements on our flesh; they are more as respects the requirements on our hearts. Briefly summed up he tells us that his law is love with all our heart, mind, soul, and strength to the Father and for our neighbor as for ourselves. This is possible to our regenerated hearts though not possible to our imperfect flesh. The Lord's requirement, therefore, is that with our hearts we serve this law of God and with our flesh we shall do to the best of our ability, and we have the assurance that in the resurrection we shall have the new bodies in which we shall be able to serve the Lord thoroughly, completely, satisfactorily.

My Joy Remain, Your Joy Be Full

Our Lord concluded this little lesson, so short and yet so full of meaning and depth, by an illustration of why he gave it, saying, "These things have I spoken unto you that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be filled full." "This is my commandment that ye love one another even as I have loved you." Wonderful words of life are these that have come down to us through the centuries, that have helped to cheer and encourage so many of the Lord's followers in the narrow way.

Many are the objections that are raised to pure and undefiled religion: Some complain that it is gloomy, joyless, a fetter upon heart and brain; that it drives men from every temple of pleasure with a whip of small cords; that it posts notice, "No trespassing here," in every field of enjoyment. Our answer must be that this is a mistake: that these are the words of those who know not, neither do they understand the things whereof they speak. Those who have truly made a covenant with the Lord, who have truly accepted him, who have truly laid down their lives at his feet and become his followers in sincerity, are filled with his joy, as he promised; and it is an increasing joy, which day by day and year by year becomes more nearly complete—a joy which will not be complete, however, until that which is perfect shall come and that which is in part shall be done away, until in the resurrected condition we shall see as we are seen and know as we are known and appreciate to the full the joys of our Lord, hearing his welcome invitation, "Enter thou into the joys of thy Lord."

We enter now into those joys through faith, through anticipation, through rest of heart, but by and by we shall enter upon them in the actual sense. Meantime it is the world, that has not submitted itself to the Lord, that has not appreciation of the joys of the Lord, that is full of selfishness and ambition and strife and envy; it knoweth us not even as it knew him not; it knows not of our joys in the Master's service even as it never appreciated the joys of our Lord in doing the Father's will, even at the sacrifice of his life.

"As I Have Loved You"

It does not astonish us that the Lord directs that we love one another, but we stand amazed with the thought contained in these words, "As I have loved you." How can we love one another with the same love which the Lord has for each of us? is our first inquiry. We reply that this is impossible at first, but as we become more and more filled with the Spirit of the Lord, we approximate more nearly to this standard of perfect love to all that are his, a love that not only would refuse to do injury to another, but a love which would delight to do good to a brother, yea, to do good at the expense of one's own time and convenience. Thus Jesus loved us all and redeemed us with his precious blood, and to whatever extent we grow in grace, knowledge and love of him, in that same proportion we are Christlike and have a Christlike love. This love is the fulfilling of the Law, and whoever has such a love for the brethren will have undoubtedly a full, sympathetic love for the whole groaning creation, and will be glad to do now the little that is possible to be done on their behalf, and doubly glad that the Lord in his own good time and pleasure has a great and wonderful blessing for every member of Adam's race.

Some one has said, "Do not imagine that you have got these things because you know how to get them. As well try to feed upon a cook book." There is a good and an important thought here: it is very important that we should know these things and understand the Lord's plans and appreciate the principles laid down in his Word, but though we had all knowledge it would not benefit us unless we used it. Let us not think of getting the benefit of the Lord's gracious provisions by merely learning how to get them, but let us take the necessary steps—see that we are fully his, see that we live close to him, see that we are fruit bearers, see that we abide in his love, in the Father's love, in the love for one another, which he has enjoined.—Z. '05:123-125.

Re the Deliverance of the Church

"The nations were angry, and Thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead, that they should be judged, and that Thou shouldest give reward unto Thy servants the Prophets, and to the saints, and them that fear Thy name, small and great; and shouldest destroy them that destroy the earth."—Revelation 11:18.

NOTHING could induce us to part with that knowledge of God and His Plan in which we rejoice today. That which makes the Lord's people appear happy is not special beauty on the outside, but the Light on the inside, the Light of the Knowledge of the glory of God, the Light of the Knowledge of the Divine Truth in our hearts. This Light shining through these earthen vessels is heart-cheering and comforting. We cannot imagine anything better. As the poet says,

"It satisfies my longings, as nothing else can do."

We are happy to be coworkers with God; and by and by we shall be coworkers with Him on the other side the veil.

Look back now and see how the Lord's promises have been fulfilled—how during the time of Harvest it has been, as He said it would be, a blessed time. Listen to the words of the Prophet concerning the time since 1875, and note how his prophecy has been fulfilled: "Oh, the blessedness of Him that waiteth, and cometh to the thousand three hundred and five and thirty days"—the blessedness of those who have been living from 1875 onward.

What blessings have we received? Just as the Bible has said to us, so has it been. Those who open their hearts to the Lord find that He not only comes in and sups with them, but that He becomes their servant, comforts them, and serves them with "meat in due season." This accounts for all these blessed truths upon which we have been feasting since we have entered into the light of Present Truth; and it proves that this Divine Plan of the Ages is not from any human being nor is it a human plan or scheme; for no human being is capable of bringing such glorious things out of the Word of God. . . .

We all agree that with the end of all of the different prophetic periods of the past, evidently there was no sudden explosion of new things; but that, on the contrary, the new conditions came in gradually. Now, however, in respect to this time in which we are living, there seems to be a little difference; for in speaking of this great Time of Trouble coming upon the world and about the changes to take place at this present time, the Lord everywhere represents it as coming suddenly. "In one hour," is a frequent expression; not meaning necessarily a literal hour, but a very short space of time. "In one day" is another expression, indicating a brief period of time. The Lord says He will make a "short work in the earth." We believe it. We remember again that the Master says, "Unless those days should be cut short, no flesh would survive; but for the Elect's sake these days shall be shortened."

What did He mean? We believe that this spirit of frenzy that is now manifesting itself in the Old World is bound to spread, and that this national anger, hatred, malice, of one nation against another will extend to persons. . . .

The war came without warning, and very speedily the nations were fighting one another; for the time had come. As these things were previously held more or less in restraint, now the Lord is letting them loose gradually; and He will let them loose more and more until the great anarchy comes which would entirely destroy our whole human race unless it was arrested. In the meantime the Kingdom class will have been glorified, and our great King will have taken unto Himself His great power, and with the Elect, the Body of Christ, the Church, He will bring in peace and blessing to mankind, as soon as the world shall have passed through the fire of anarchy and the present order of things shall have been dissolved in the great heat—not a moment sooner. . . .

We cannot be far from our change; and we advise that all of the Lord's people live **day by day** just as though this was the last day on this side the Veil, and that tonight or tomorrow would usher us into the glorious things beyond the Veil. Living in this way will surely be at least a good experience for us, bringing blessings and ripening of character. What a blessed way to live!—every day in anticipation of seeing our Redeemer and sharing in His wonderful work! The things connected with this present time seem less and less important to us, on account of which our names are cast out as evil by those who are living for all they can get out of the present life.

"Drink Ye All of It"

What may be done to our mortal bodies? None have the power to injure us as New Creatures. We are waiting for our change, which will come to some in one way and to some in another. God be praised! His will be done! Our Master had a cup at the conclusion of His experiences, and it was an especially bitter one, His suffering as an evil-doer and as a blasphemer being especially severe. Under the Jewish Law, blasphemy of God's name was really one of the most grievous crimes, and was especially punished by ignominious death. **Jesus** was not the blasphemer, but the **Scribes** and **Pharisees** were the blasphemers. Yet Jesus was to die as the blasphemer, while those who were really doing the blaspheming were the ones who put Him to death!

We should not wonder if in the Divine arrangement God might have some such bitter cup for the feet-members of the Body of Christ. Why should we think so? For various reasons. We have so much favor from God, that it would seem that we would deserve to have severer testings and a fuller and more bitter cup than others have had. Furthermore, the Scriptures seem to imply that it will be so.

Elijah was a type of the Church, and we remember that at his departure he went in a chariot of fire; and we believe that this symbolically represents the time of trouble on the Church when the time of our departure shall come. Then, again, John the Baptist was a semi-type, the semi-antitype of Elijah. John's experiences were very bitter. He was imprisoned for a while and not permitted to do any preaching; and he no doubt wondered in the time of his imprisonment whether or not he had been mistaken in his glorious expectations in regard to the Messiah. Then came the sudden edict for him to be beheaded. Herodias and Salome were anxious to get rid of him, but King Herod was not. We remember that in our interpretation of this type the king represents the civil power, Herodias represents the Roman Catholic Church and Salome, the daughter, represents the Protestant Churches Federated. These are more or less united to the civil powers, the "Mother" especially. We remember that there was some special dancing on the part of Salome before the king, who was so pleased with her that he told her that she might have anything she desired, even to the half of his kingdom. After she had conferred with her mother, they decided that the best thing that could happen for them would be the death of John the Baptist.

So it was in the Master's case. The religious rulers decided that the best thing that could be done was that He should perish. We remember that it was the last high priest of the Jewish nation, Caiaphas, who prophesied respecting Jesus that it was expedient that one man should die for the people rather than that the whole nation perish. So it was in the case of John. Herodias and Salome concluded that John the Baptist should die, and thereby they would cease to have his continual reminder of their wrong course; and so they would have him beheaded.

Whether or not this is to be a part of the antitype remains to be seen. It would not surprise us if it will be so. We are not speaking positively; but we wish to be "wise as serpents." Let us not be surprised at whatever things the Lord may permit to come. Let us remember that our Master was given a bitter cup of suffering in His closing hours, and that the Father did not seek to remove it from Him. But Jesus meekly accepted it, saying, "The cup which My Father hath poured for Me, shall I not drink it?" So we should be well prepared for whatever cup of bitter experiences and ignominy the Lord may have for us. At the same time we should have in our minds the refreshing thought given us by the promise in the Scriptures, that the Lord will not permit us to be tempted, or tested, above what we are able to bear, but will with the temptation provide a way of escape. The further assurance is that "All things shall work together for good to them that love God, to the called ones according to His purpose."—Romans 8:28.

Words of Encouragement

Have we heard the Call to be the Bride, the Lamb's Wife, to come out of the world, to be dead to the world, to give our wills to Him, to sacrifice our earthly treasures? Have we become footstep followers of Jesus? "If any man will be My disciple, let him deny himself [give up his own self-will], take up his cross and follow Me." Have we been following the Master, and will we continue to follow Him? In our hearts we should be saying, Yes.

The Master said that in the Regeneration those who would now follow Him would have glorious bodies, like His own. "We shall be like Him, and see Him as He is"—sharers in His glory. May that be the portion of all of us! Let us rejoice together in the glorious things that our God has arranged for those who are His Church—first for the great Head of that Church, our Lord Jesus, and later for us, His humble followers, who are seeking to become Joint-heirs with Him in His Kingdom.

Let us remember that it is not knowledge alone that sanctifies. Knowledge is valuable to the sanctifying of the spirit only when we comply with the conditions that we shall mortify the self-will of the flesh and cultivate more and more of the Spirit of our Lord, about which St. Peter tells us. We are exhorted to put off all these: malice, hatred, wrath, strife, etc., and to put on all these: joy, peace, long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faith, meekness, brotherly kindness and love. The Apostle Peter says, "If these things be in you and abound, they make you that ye shall be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ"; and "thus an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ." (2 Peter 1:5-11.) Let our ambition and aim be to have a share in that Kingdom!

"Who Shall Stand?"

Let us remember that we are in a testing season. The Apostles had a similar one during the interim between our Lord's death and Pentecost. After our Lord's resurrection, He appeared to His disciples a few times, and then they did not see Him for many days. Then they became discouraged and said, "There is no use waiting"; "I go fishing," said one. Two others said, "We will go with thee." They were about to go into the fishing business and leave the work of fishing for men. This was a testing time for the disciples. So also there is one now. If there is any reason that would lead any to let go of the Lord and His Truth and to cease sacrificing for the Lord's Cause, then it is not merely the love of God in the heart which has prompted interest in the Lord, but something else; probably a hoping that the time was short; the consecration was only for a certain time. If so, now is a good time to let go.

Very probably it is now as it was when Jesus said to His disciples on a certain occasion, "Will ye also go away?" The answer was, "Lord, to whom shall we go? Thou hast the words of eternal life." We would starve spiritually if we went to any other than the Lord's table. We know not anywhere else to go. We shall stay right at the Lord's table. He has been feeding us on the Message of Truth and Life, and we believe that He will put on the table everything necessary for those who are hungering and thirsting for the Truth; and that the Truth on every subject necessary for us will be given as the Lord is pleased to reveal it; for He has promised, "they shall be filled."—Z. '14:329-332.

The White Raiment of the Kingdom

"He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot his name out of the Book of Life, but I will confess his name before My Father, and before His angels."—Revelation 3:5.

IN THIS text, as throughout the Bible, the thought is maintained that the elect class, who will receive the highest glory, honor and blessing from the Lord, must demonstrate their loyalty by overcoming. It is not sufficient that there shall be an overcoming of the will at the beginning of the Christian career, but subsequently there must be trials and testings endured, and these must be met in an overcoming manner. The consecration having been made, and the trials and testings having begun, the individual yielding under those temptations and testings, and continuing to be overcome by them, would prove that he is not sufficiently loyal; for the Lord has promised that His grace shall be sufficient in every time of need.—2 Corinthians 12:9.

Although the Lord's grace is sufficient, this would not mean that we might not sometimes fall into temptation. We might fall into temptation inadvertently, without the consent of our wills, and "be overtaken in a fault." But the Lord's grace is sufficient to bring us out of the temptations as overcomers, enabling us to triumph over them. Falling

into temptation does not mean **falling** in temptation—falling **when tempted.** But when one is temporarily overcome, whether it be a yielding to a temptation of the flesh or whether it be a wilfulness of spirit, or mind, has much to do with the nature and degree of the sin. We may not always be able to triumph fully, completely, according to the **flesh,** but the **will** must be loyal. We must triumph in the **mind,** otherwise we shall not be overcomers.

This overcoming is a gradual work, progressing throughout our Christian course, from the moment of consecration down to the conclusion of life. But the text apparently takes hold of the conclusion, rather than the beginning or the middle of the work, and implies that the individual has at the **end** of the trial, the **end** of his race-course, this overcoming degree of righteousness, so that he may be classed as an overcomer. Such an overcomer will be clothed in white raiment.

White Raiment Loaned to Us

The Scriptures give us to understand that at the very beginning of our Christian experience, we figuratively are clothed in white raiment. This white raiment represents **justification**—we are justified freely from all things. It is a robe without a spot. It is sometimes spoken of as Christ's robe of righteousness, because it comes to us through Christ. It is to be had only through Him. He is able to **impute** to us, to **loan** to us, grant to us temporarily, this robe. It is spoken of as the wedding garment. At an oriental wedding, a wedding garment of white linen was used to cover over the clothing worn by each guest. It was loaned to the guest at the wedding by the host, when he appeared at the wedding-feast.

White linen signifies purity. So when Christ gives us the use of His merit, it is as a white garment to cover our imperfections. It is an **imputation** of His righteousness, which is to us **justification.** We are exhorted to keep our garments unspotted from the world. The imputation of righteousness given us, we are to preserve, to maintain. But we cannot fully maintain it of ourselves. Our tongues may sometimes say things that we wish they had not said, and our hands may sometimes do things we would not desire. Hence, God has provided a way by which our blemishes or transgressions may be eradicated—those not wilful. This way is our daily application for the cleansing of these unwilling transgressions, through the precious blood. Thus we keep our garments unspotted from the world. Thus our justification, our white robe, is maintained—should be maintained.

White Raiment Our Own

But it is not sufficient that we have the imputation of our Savior's righteousness. This imputation is only a temporary arrangement. We need to come to the place where we shall have a righteousness of our own. Our flesh is imperfect; as St. Paul says, we cannot do the things which we would. In spite of our best endeavors things are bound to go more or less wrong. But we are to prove ourselves overcomers—"more than conquerors." The Lord has arranged that at the conclusion of our trial, at the end of the present life, all the overcomers shall receive the new body. This new body will be a body of actual purity. Thus, as the Apostle says, we shall "be clothed upon with our House which is from Heaven." So our raiment will be changed from a garment of **imputed** perfection, our justification by faith, to that which represents **actual** perfection. At the resurrection we shall receive that body of inherent purity, without blemish, without spot, which is here pictured as "white raiment."

"Brought Before the King"

Furthermore, we read of each of these that the Lord "will not blot out his name out of the Book of Life," in which are written the names of all those who become truly the Lord's people, those who have made with the Lord "a covenant by sacrifice," all who renounce their wills, who present their bodies a living sacrifice. The name of each of these is recorded, entered in the Lamb's Book of Life, when he starts to live the new life, and to demonstrate his loyalty. Just as these are clothed upon with the robe of Christ's righteousness in advance of being actually tested, so their names are written in that Book in advance of being actually tested. If they do not remain faithful, their names will be blotted out of that Book of Life. But if they are faithful their names will not be blotted out of the Book of Life; and they will attain all those glorious things which are promised to those who love Him supremely.—Revelation 21:7.

More than this, the Lord says, "I will confess their names before My Father and before His angels." The intimation here is that the overcomers will have such characters that the Lord will not be ashamed of them, but will be pleased to own them in the presence of the Father and the holy angels. We are to be "changed from glory to glory," into the likeness of our Lord. (2 Corinthians 3:18.) In the end, these overcomers will each be so grandly developed that the Lord will not be ashamed to confess any of them and to say, Here is one of My followers. Here is another. They have walked in My footsteps and have overcome. But He will be ashamed of any who are ashamed of Him. Of such He says, "Whosoever shall be ashamed of Me and of My words, of him shall the Son of Man be ashamed, when He shall come in His own glory and in His Father's, and of the holy angels."—Luke 9:26.

It is not a matter of favoritism, but of character-development. If they will not endure to the end, if they do not prove overcomers, they will not be fit for the Kingdom and association with their Lord.

This brings up the thought that there is another class mentioned in the Bible—the Great Company class, as in contrast to the little Flock—or the antitypical Levite class as in contrast to the antitypical Priestly class. The Great Company had their names written in the Lamb's Book of Life, but they were not overcomers in the truest sense. They did not stand faithful. Because of not proving faithful, they will not be confessed before the Father and the holy angels in the same sense as the Bride class.

It is stated that the Bride will be presented before the Father, and that "the virgins, her companions" (Psalm 45:13-15) will be there also—but the latter will not be confessed as the Bride class. We will not say that their names will be blotted out of the lamb's Book of Life. **Their** names may remain. But those who go into the Second Death will surely have their names blotted out of the Book; they will be destroyed with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord.—Z. '15:118, 119.

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The Apostle says we are to rejoice when we fall into various temptations—not that we are to rejoice if we fall into **sin** when tempted, but that we may rejoice if we find ourselves suddenly precipitated into temptation. Temptation is not sin. If we could but keep in mind the fact that every temptation, every trial, every persecution, every difficulty in life, permitted to come upon us who have made the covenant of sacrifice with the Lord, is intended to **prove us,** to test our love, to see whether or not our characters are **fixed,** rooted and grounded in righteousness and being built up in love, it would put all these trials, difficulties and temptations in a new light before us, and greatly assist us in fighting a good fight and overcoming. When we find ourselves suddenly in temptation, trial, we should say, If by these temptations, or trials, the Lord is proving my love and devotion to Him, then, however trifling they may be or however important, I will diligently use them as favorable opportunities to demonstrate to my Lord the fullness of my love and devotion to Him and His cause. I must fight a good fight against this thing—the world, the flesh or the Adversary,—whatever it might be that had brought the snare.

Thus viewed and thus met we can rejoice in every such experience: every trial and every difficulty will prove a blessing; for we shall, first of all, have an opportunity to shew the Lord that we will endure, and not compromise His cause or our own position as His servants. We can rejoice also because we know that under such trials our characters will make advancement toward crystallization, if we overcome; and because we know that the Lord would not let us fall into any temptation which He would not cause to work out for us a blessing if we are wholly loyal. Let us dwell often upon the words of the Apostles: "Beloved, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations."—Z. '14:149.

◆

Too often the Lord's people are disposed to lay down their lives for themselves, for their own comfort, or to lay down their lives, their time, their energy, in fellowshipping with those of the brethren most congenial to them in cultivation or in advancement. Is not this pleasing ourselves in ignoring to serve those members of the Body who need our assistance most?—Z. '08:326.

◆

"INSTEAD PRAISE AND THANKSGIVING"

Instead of intoxication with the spirit of the world and its ambitions, its craze for money and for show and outward adornment we are to be so filled with the Spirit of the Lord, that our chiefest joy, our chiefest blessing, will be in giving thanks to the Lord for his goodness, in maintaining a fellowship of heart with him and then additionally having fellowship one with another, with those who are in the truth, in the Lord. We are to speak one to another in psalms, hymns, and spiritual songs, thus making melody in our hearts to the Lord. The Lord's people are not to be morose, sullen, unhappy, always in tears. This is not the will of God concerning them; they are on the contrary to be continually rejoicing, full of gladness, the basis for this to be their faith in the Word of God, which they all continually eat and are nourished by, together with their fellowship with the Lord, which will continually be a ground for praise and thanksgiving; and additionally, their fellowship with one another, which will be more sweet than any earthly or selfish fellowship; more precious than any sensual relationship, the exhilaration of the new mind continually growing stronger and more God-like, and seeking to build up one another in the most holy faith and character-likeness of our Redeemer. The Apostle says that we are to give to God, even the Father, thanks always for all things in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ: thanks for the trials, thanks for the clouds as well as for the blessings and the sunshine; thanks for matters that seem to be adversities, knowing that God is able to make all things work together for good to them and has promised to do so, and that the entire matter of needs and welfare are in the hands of our Redeemer, who is too wise to err and too loving to be unkind, and who will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able. Well then may we rejoice!

We are exhorted also to submit ourselves one to another in the reverence of the Lord, not to be dictatorial, not to be too self-assertive, not to be anxious that our will should be done on earth or in heaven, but rather desirous that the will of the Lord should thus be done, and that we may be looking to note his leadings and providences in and through others as well as through ourselves, and especially to note the instructions in his Word. —Z. '08:185.

◆

Not only are we ourselves not to do unrighteousness, not to speak evil, not to think evil, not to do evil toward friend or foe; but we are to be so heartily in sympathy with this procedure that if another proposes to do an evil in our interest, we would be so in sympathy with the divine will and the law of brotherly love that we would oppose the act with all our energy.—Z. '08:251.

◆

Our handicaps through imperfections of the flesh are not so unequal as to make it easier for one than for another to enter into the Kingdom under the call of the Gospel Age. For where much is given, much is required; and the judgment of the Lord will be according to the heart, the will, the intention, the endeavor, and not according to the flesh, its weaknesses and its failures.—Z. '15:350.

STANDFAST BIBLE STUDENTS' GENERAL CONVENTION

SEPTEMBER 3rd, 4th and 5th, 1921

Upper Dominion Hall, 339 Pender Street West, Vancouver, B.C.

CHAIRMAN - - - Bro. W. B. Palmer
SECRETARY - - - Bro. G. H. Biddle

SATURDAY, Sept. 3rd, 1921—

OBEDIENCE

"Hath the LORD as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to hearken than the fat of rams."—1 Sam. 15:22.

10:00 A.M.—Address of Welcome.....Bro. C. E. Heard
Response ..... Chairman
10:30 A.M.—Bethel Service.
10:45 to 12 noon—Old Corn Gem Study (No. 64, p. 8, To Obey Is Better Than Sacrifice).....Bro. J. H. Bartlett

2:00 P.M.—Praise and Testimony.
3:00 P.M.—Intermission.
3:30 to 5 P.M.—Temple Study (The Life-Giving River).....Bro. I. C. Edwards

7:30 P.M.—Praise Service.
7:45 P.M.—Tabernacle Study .....Bro. C. E. Heard

SUNDAY, Sept. 4th, 1921—

LOVE

"Whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in Him."—1 John 2:5.

10:00 A.M.—Bethel Service.
10:15 to 12 noon—Three 35-minute Sermonettes .....Bros. Roy Pattison, Al. Osborn and G. Sellars

2:00 P.M.—Praise and Testimony.
3:00 P.M.—Intermission.
3:30 to 5 P.M.—Old Corn Gem Study (No. 64, p. 10, The Fruit of the True Vine).....Bro. G. H. Vance

7:30 P.M.—Praise Service.
7:45 P.M.—Discourse .....Bro. W. B. Palmer

MONDAY, Sept. 5th, 1921—

DELIVERANCE

"When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour."—Isa. 43:2, 3.

10:00 A.M.—Bethel Service.
10:15 A.M.—Praise and Testimony.
11:00 to 12 noon—Discourse.....Bro. H. Maxwell

2:00 P.M.—Praise and Testimony.
3:00 P.M.—Intermission.
3:30 to 5 P.M.—Old Corn Gem Study (No. 64, p. 11, Re the Deliverance of the Church).....Bro. J. Moore

7:00 P.M.—Praise and Testimony.
7:45 P.M.—Discourse.....Bro. C. E. Heard

LOVE FEAST

Old Corn Gems

NUMBER SIXTY-FIVE

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The Watered Lilies

The Master stood in His garden.
Among the lilies fair.
Which His own right hand had planted.
And trained with tend'rest care:

He looked at their snowy blossoms.
And marked with observant eye
That the flowers were sadly drooping.
For their leaves were parched and dry.

"My lilies need to be watered."
The Heavenly Master said;
"Wherein shall I draw it for them.
And raise each drooping head!"

Close to His feet on the pathway.
Empty. and frail. and small.
An earthen vessel was lying.
Which seemed no use at all;

But the Master saw. and raised it
From the dust in which it lay.
And smiled. as He gently whispered.
"This shall do My work to-day:"

"It is but an earthen vessel.
But it lay so close to Me:
It is small. but it is empty.—
That is all it needs to be."

So to the fountain He took it.
And filled it full to the brim:
How glad was the earthen vessel
To be of some use to Him!

He poured forth the living water
Over His lilies fair.
Until the vessel was empty.
And again He filled it there.

He watered the drooping lilies
Until they revived again;
And the Master saw with pleasure
That His labour had not been vain.

His own hand had drawn the water
Which refreshed the thirsty flowers:
But He used the earthen vessel
To convey the living showers.

And to itself it whispered.
As He laid it aside once more.
"Still will I lie in His pathway.
Just where I did before.

"Close would I keep to the Master.
Empty would I remain.
And perhaps some day He may use me
To water His flowers again."—Z. '01 : 281.

ANNOUNCEMENT

A local Convention will be held at Duncan, V.I., B.C., on Saturday and Sunday, October 1st and 2nd, 1921, under the auspices of the Duncan and Ladysmith Ecclesias. Bro. Arthur Thackray, General Delivery, Duncan, B.C., Secretary of Convention.

A further announcement will be made in Old Corn Gems No. 66.

The Apostle declares of them. "All things are for your sakes." (2 Cor. 4:15.) Everything in the realm of nature and of grace must for the time so operate as to be most favorable to this class. for the Lord has declared that all things shall work together for good for these—"the called according to his purpose." (Rom. 8:28.) Whatever cannot be overruled for their good must be hindered. must be stopped. cannot proceed. Little does the world realize the important place in its affairs and interests occupied by this Little Flock; indeed the world knoweth them not. even as it knew not their Lord (1 John 3:1)—the world reckons them as a part of the filth and offscourings of all things. knows them as fools for Christ's sake. But by and by the veil will be lifted. and the whole world shall understand the mysterious workings of divine providence.—Z. '08:46.

◇

The declaration is that His day will be a strenuous one: "Who shall stand when He appeareth?" "Who will abide the day of His coming?" (Malachi 3:2.) The intimation is that not many will abide. not many will stand—the majority will fall.

The reason is given. He will require such purity. such holiness. that few will come up to His requirements. The tests He will impose will be like fuller's soap. which is the foe of every spot upon a garment white. His requirements will be like those of a refiner of silver—all the dross must be eliminated. in a furnace hot enough to insure its separation. The test will last a considerable time. for He will sit as a refiner sits. giving close inspection. that the heat be neither too great nor too little. the time neither too long nor too short.—Z. '11:444.

◇

The antitypical rest. into which the Lord's people enter. has two phases. We who believe enter into rest **now**. We have the peace of God ruling in our hearts and guiding our lives. We have the peace of faith. the rest of faith. the confidence that God will direct our course. Therefore we are **contented,** even though not yet **satisfied**. We shall not be **satisfied** until we enter into our **complete rest**. Our true rest will be that glorious. perfect condition beyond the veil. which we shall attain through the First Resurrection.—Z. '14:26.

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OLD CORN GEMS

NUMBER SIXTY-FIVE

"And they did eat of the OLD CORN of the land on the morrow after the Passover . . . and the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the OLD CORN of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year." Joshua 5:11-12.

A SAFE RULE

"WHERE A BROTHER GIVES AN INTERPRETATION OF A SCRIPTURE WHICH DIFFERS FROM THAT GIVEN BY BROTHER RUSSELL, AND BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION SEEMS REASONABLE AND IN HARMONY WITH THE PLAN OF GOD, THEN WE BELIEVE IT A SAFE RULE TO FOLLOW BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION, FOR THE REASON THAT HE IS THE SERVANT OF THE CHURCH, SO CONSTITUTED BY THE LORD FOR THE LAODICEAN PERIOD; AND THEREFORE WE SHOULD EXPECT THE LORD TO TEACH US THROUGH HIM. WHERE THERE ARISES A DOUBT IN THE MIND AS TO WHICH INTERPRETATION IS CORRECT, THEN IT IS ALWAYS SAFER TO RESOLVE THAT DOUBT IN FAVOR OF BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION. WE BELIEVE SUCH TO BE IN HARMONY WITH THE LORD'S WILL." Z. '18:51.

God's Will Concerning the Church

"This is the will of God [concerning you], even your sanctification."—1 Thess. 4:3.

IN OUR TEXT the expression, "This is the will of God," is in the nature of advice rather than command. Considering the class to whom this advice is given, we find them to be those who desire to draw near to God and to have Him draw near to them. God has promised a great reward for submission to His will in every particular; and the Apostle Paul is stating what the will of God is concerning those who desire to live in nearness to Him. He tells them that it is God's will that they be fully set apart to His service; that they lay down their lives in His work; that in all the affairs of life their hearts should be set to know and to do His will.

In words of loving entreaty the Apostle elsewhere addresses this class, saying, "I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, which is your reasonable service." (Rom. 12:1.) The phrase, "Present your bodies," includes not only the primary presentation, but the continuation of the living sacrifice to the completion of the work. In other words, the Gospel Age is the acceptable time when God is willing to receive those who come unto Him through Christ. It is the time for His drawing, calling, those who are to become members of the Elect Church.

God's will for His believing people, justified by faith in the Ransom and consecrated to His service, has always been the same as the Apostle stated, namely, "This is the will of God [concerning you], even your sanctification." To produce this sanctification in believers God has given unto us "exceeding great and precious promises," and declares that the truth of His Word will produce the sanctification of character acceptable to Him—conformity to the image of His dear Son, our Redeemer.

Sanctification does not mean human perfection. It is the consecration, or devotion of the **will**, which through Christ is accepted of the Father as perfect; it is a consecration of the **body** to sacrifice—even unto death. As we have seen, that body is not made actually perfect through justification by faith, but merely reckonedly perfect, according to our will, our heart, our intention. The new will should seek to bring every power, every talent, every endowment of its body, into full accord with the Lord, and should seek to exercise an influence in the same direction upon all with whom it comes in contact.

This does not mean, however, that in the few short years of the present life it will be able to bring its poor, imperfect body to perfection. On the contrary, the Apostle assures us in connection with the Church, that in death it is sown in corruption, sown in weakness, sown in dishonor, sown a [an imperfect] natural body (1 Cor. 15:42-44); and that not until in the Resurrection we are given new bodies, strong, perfect, glorious, immortal, shall we have attained the perfection which we seek and which the Lord promises shall be ours eventually, if in the present time of weakness and imperfection we manifest to Him the loyalty of our hearts.

Our text, as well as many other portions of the Scriptures, teaches us that the great work which God asks of us is not for others, but is a work in ourselves, subduing, conquering, ruling **self**. Everything else, therefore, our doing service to the household of faith, our doing good unto all men, etc., is subservient to this most important work within. For, as the Apostle by inspiration declares, though we should preach the Gospel eloquently to others, and though we should give all our goods to feed the poor, or become martyrs for a good cause, we should be nothing from the Divine viewpoint, without love—the Spirit of Christ and of the Father—developed in us as the ruling principle of life. (1 Cor. 13:3.) But before we can "put on love—the bond of perfectness"—and have its rule established, we have many enemies to **put out**.

Our Three Great Foes

The heart is the battleground on which the Holy Spirit helps us to wage warfare against the enemies which since the Adamic fall have taken possession of the human mind. Our battle is to be against Sin, the great taskmaster, which captured our race more than six thousand years ago. Satan, the great master or general of Sin, is our enemy, and has largely to do with the various influences against which we must contend. We are not, however, to battle directly with Satan, though we are to "resist" him; that is, we are to resist his influence, his deceptions, and his endeavors to lead us into error and into sin. We should be powerless against this great enemy were it not that our Lord Jesus has conquered Sin, and that He is on our part, so that we can confidently say, Greater is He that is on our part than all they that be against us.

Again, our battle is with the **world**. By this we do not mean with our fellow-creatures; for, blinded by the Adversary, they are little, if at all, accountable for their course. We are to do battle with "the spirit of the world" and its influences. The disposition of the world, the mind of the world, the motives which actuate the world, the ambitions of the world, the pride of life and the deceitfulness of riches—the wrong views of matters as seen from the worldly standpoint—we are to resist, to fight against. And it is a **daily** battle.

Finally, our battle is with the flesh—our own flesh. Ever since Sin captured our race, its slavery has been conducive to mental, moral and physical degradation. Its every tendency has been toward evil, and that continually; and although our Lord Jesus had compassion on us and redeemed us from slavery to Sin, with His own precious blood, yet we have in our bodies the motions, the tendencies toward sin.

So, although we are now free, and are with the mind serving the Law of Christ, and although we have covenanted to battle for righteousness, truth, goodness and purity, we find our new selves harassed by the old, perverted tastes and inclinations of our own flesh toward the service of the old taskmaster. Not the least of our battles, therefore, is against these perverted tendencies of our flesh; and the battle with these is also a daily battle. With the great Apostle Paul we should be able to say, **"I keep my body** [my flesh and its desires] **under"**—in subjection to my new will, the New Creature.

From the moment we make a full consecration of ourselves unto death in the service of the Lord, He reckons our flesh as dead, and begets us as New Creatures. Our new minds are alive toward God with a newness of life. Hence those motions of sin which we are seeking to bring into absolute subjection to the will of God in Christ are not recognized by the Lord as the will or the motions of the New Creature enlisted in His service, but merely as a part of the general enemy, Sin, pursuing after and battling with us. These we are pledged to resist, and to war against; and to overcome these He promises sufficient grace and help.

Our Daily Battle With Self

These enemies in our own flesh cause us the greatest difficulties. To these Satan appeals; these he seeks to encourage in the warfare against the new spirit of our minds; through these the spirit of the world gains closest approach to us, and seeks to capture us and lead us back as captives to Sin. So to speak, the "New Creature in Christ" is beset, surrounded on every hand with enemies seeking its disaster and re-enslavement. We must battle for ourselves, for our own liberty, for victory over our own weaknesses; we must battle against the spirit of the world, against delusions and snares of the Adversary by which he would make evil things appear good, and right to appear undesirable. No wonder that the child of God is urged to be continually watchful; that he is urged to "put on the whole armor of God"; that he is cautioned in respect to his various wily foes and especially against those of his own flesh; that he is urged to faithfulness and loyalty of heart!

Heart-loyalty to the Lord means continual effort to bring all the conduct of our lives, yea, the very thoughts and intents of our hearts, into subjection to the Divine will. (2 Cor. 10:4, 5.) This is our first duty, our continual duty, and will be the end of our duty; for "This is the will of God, even your sanctification." "Be ye holy; for I [the Lord] am holy."—1 Peter 1:16.

Absolute holiness is to be the **standard** which our **minds** can gladly and fully indorse and **live up** to, but to which we can never attain actually and physically so long as we are subject to the frailties of our fallen natures and the besetments of the world and the Adversary. But day by day we are taught of God; and as we come to a fuller knowledge of His glorious character, and as the appreciation of it more and more fills our hearts, the new mind will more and more gain influence, strength, power, over the weaknesses of the flesh, whatever they may be—and these weaknesses vary with the different members of the Body.

If we be sanctified to God by the Truth, if our wills be dead and the Lord's will be fully accepted as ours, in thought, word and deed, then we have attained the will of God, and shall win the prize as "overcomers" even if we have never had opportunity to preach, to give to the poor, or to suffer as martyrs for the Truth's sake. Let us all note well this point: "This is the Lord's will [concerning you], even **your** sanctification." **Let nothing** becloud or obscure this truth; but let it **dominate our course in life**. Then if **God's** will is really **our** will, we have a clearly marked pathway before us.

But without doubt, before all such God will open opportunities to serve the Truth to others, to let their light shine to the glory of the Father and the blessing of fellow-creatures; for this is His command to us, and we may be sure He gives us no commands impossible to be obeyed. If you have been seeking opportunities of service and have found none, there must be something wrong; you may have been seeking some **special** service of your own preference (your old will meddling with your newly adopted will—the Lord's).

Possibly the great Teacher sees in you pride, which you would have been prompt to crush had you recognized it, but which hid itself from you under the cloak of "self-respect." Possibly the great Teacher by His providence and His Word is saying to you, "Whatsoever thy hand **findeth to do,** do it with thy might." (Eccl. 9:10.) Possibly He sees that **you** would be spoiled were He to give you a more important service for others, before you have learned the lesson of humility—all important in God's sight. Act quickly, therefore: the **time** is **short.** "Humble yourselves, therefore, under the mighty hand of God [to do whatever service His providence has made possible to you], that He may exalt you in due time."—1 Peter 5:6.

Sanctification the Result of Love of God

True sanctification of the heart to the Lord means diligence in His service: a declaration of the good tidings to others; the building up of one another in the most holy faith. It also means that we do good unto all men as we have opportunity, especially unto the household of faith; that in these various ways our lives, consecrated to the Lord, shall be laid down for the brethren day by day, opportunity by opportunity, as they shall come to us; that our love for the Lord, for the brethren, for our families and sympathetically for the world of mankind, will increasingly fill our hearts as we grow in grace, knowledge and obedience to the Divine Word and example.—Gal. 6:10; 1 John 3:16.

Nevertheless, all this exercising of our energies for others is merely one of the many ways in which by the Lord's providence **our own sanctification** may be accomplished. As iron sharpeneth iron, so our energies in behalf of others bring blessings to ourselves. Additionally, while we should more and more come to the condition of loving our neighbors as ourselves—especially the household of faith—yet the mainspring back of all this should be our supreme love for our Creator and Redeemer, and our desire to be and to do what would please Him. Our sanctification, therefore, must be primarily toward God and first affect our own hearts and wills and, as a result of such devotion to God, find its exercise in the interest of the brethren and of all men.—Z. '12:340, 341.

The Great Privilege of True Service

"The Son of Man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give His life a Ransom for many."—Matthew 20:28.

THE word **minister** has the same import as the word **serve.** The Master tells us that the purpose of His coming into the world was not a selfish one. He had been quite content with the glory and honor which He had with the Father before the world was. (John 17:5.) While it is true that the Savior is now exalted to a position very much higher than His previous one, yet He assures us that it was not with the spirit, the desire, for exaltation that He came into the world. On the contrary, He wished to **serve.** He said, "I delight to do Thy will, O My God! Thy Law is written in My heart."—Psalm 40:8.

In obedience to this Divine will, our Lord left the glory which He had with the Father, came down to earth and gave Himself up to death, even the death of the cross. On the night of His betrayal and arrest He said, "The cup which My Father hath poured for Me, shall I not drink it?" He was obedient even unto the end.

Before coming into the world, our Lord had perceived that mankind was in need of a Savior, and no doubt this had to do with His gladly accepting the Divine arrangement. He saw something of the Father's purpose in regard to fallen humanity. And when, during His earthly life, He saw these poor creatures in sin, degradation and weakness, He did not try to make them slaves. He did not try to use His power, His intelligence, selfishly for His own comfort; but He laid down His life unselfishly. He set Himself to work out the Plan which the Father had arranged.

Our Lord came not to be ministered unto. He did not come into the world to have servants and to get all that He could in return for the expenditure of a small amount of His own energy. He came not from any selfish motive whatever, but to serve others—to do good. As He Himself testified, "Greater love hath no man than this, that a man **lay down his life** for his friends." This He did in harmony with the Father's Plan.

We do not understand, however, that our Lord refused to have any one serve Him. He accepted service from others. The thought of our text is that He came to render a service; not that He might be served; and in order that He might carry out His purpose it was necessary for Him to become a servant. Had there been no need for that service, we cannot think that the Lord would have humbled Himself and taken the bondman's form, or have undergone the severe trials of His earthly existence. But He came to render a service that was necessary to the well-being, happiness, yea, the very life of the entire human family.

Through Adam's disobedience sin had entered into the world. God's Law pronounced the penalty of death for that sin. Thus the whole race of mankind was perishing; and if they were ever to be rescued, so that they would not perish like brute beasts, they must be redeemed. According to the Divine Law there must be a Ransom-price for the first perfect man, who had sinned. The Only Begotten was willing to meet this necessity. He rejoiced to do this work, to be the servant, the minister of God for this purpose, because of the need of the service, because it would bring blessing to others.

This is the spirit that should actuate every one of us. We should desire to incorporate into our character this principle of service. We should not serve merely because we like to work, like to be busy, but because we perceive there is a work necessary, and we are glad to lay down our lives in this blessed service.

The Attitude of True Consecration

There are some who think it necessary to wash the feet of others. But since there is no real good to be accomplished by such a ceremony—nothing desirable—there is no reason why it should be performed. We cannot think that Jesus would have washed His disciples' feet unless they had needed washing. But if at any time we can thus render a real service, any of us should be glad of the opportunity to serve a fellow-member of the Body of Christ—by washing his feet, or in any manner. The thought is to appreciate the privilege of real service, rather than the opportunity of doing something merely because it is menial. Jesus did what He did because it was helpful service, and was the Father's will. He wished also to teach His disciples that they should not be above doing the humblest service for each other as brethren. In addition, Jesus' words on this occasion seemed to emphasize the thought of the need of daily cleansing of the Lord's disciples from earth-defilement. See John 13: 6-10.

The laying down of our Lord's life was accomplished moment by moment, day by day, in teaching, in healing the sick, the deaf, the blind, and in instructing His disciples. In nothing did He seek to serve Himself. Therefore the record is, "He went about doing good." We should make application of this principle to ourselves; for "as He was, so are we, in this world." The attitude of true consecration is that we walk in Jesus' steps, and that we seek to know the Father's will in order to do it. This implies that we be Bible students, like the Bereans of old, who "searched the Scriptures daily."

If we have the Master's spirit, we shall be desirous of "doing good unto all men as we have opportunity, especially unto them who are of the Household of Faith." (Galatians 6:10.) And this is the advice of St. Paul, who urged that we be followers of himself, even as he followed Christ. The lives of Jesus and the Apostles stand out very distinctly on the pages of history as notable for their unselfish service of others.

Many have lorded it over God's heritage. The context shows that our Lord had this class in mind. He declares that the rulers of the Gentiles exercised authority over their people; and that this was at the expense of the ruled, and was very rarely accompanied by a desire to serve the people.

Selfishness Unfits for the Kingdom

We see how our Master came to use the words of our text. The disciples were afflicted with a common ailment—love of honor of men and also love of honor of the Lord. Two of them had made an earnest request to have a place of special honor in His Kingdom. Their request aroused a spirit of indignation among the other ten, and a controver resulted. They had the thought fixed in their minds that Jesus had promised them a share in the Kingdom. (Matthew 19:27-29.) If it had been wrong for them to have this promise in mind, it would have been wrong for the Lord to give them the promise. But they failed to see that the Father would give that place to none who would not manifest fullest loyalty to Him and to His Word.

The disciples had at that time a certain amount of false dignity, or pride, that would have made them unfit for a place in the Throne. Hence the Lord reminded them that the conditions upon which a seat in the Throne would be given to any one were that such a one should manifest so great loyalty to the principles of God's Government, and so great humility of spirit, that he would be glad to render service to any one in need. And He set Himself forth as an Example.

We paraphrase our Lord's words: Do you think that I left Heaven and came down to earth that people might serve Me? No. The conditions to which I have come are very inferior to those which I left. But the Father gave Me the privilege of service in this matter, and I am glad to have this service, because it is the Divine will. I have come to minister, to serve, to give My life as a Ransom-price for all.

This thought, then, He set before them—that they should rejoice in the privilege of service—rejoice in having the privilege of doing something really helpful to others, especially the brethren in the Body of Christ. As we apply this principle broadly, we see how it is exempliified in the world, in the affairs of every day life. The whole human family are servants. One man serves as a jeweler; another as a manufacturer of woolen goods. He serves by buying wool, converting it into cloth and into garments. Another serves as a grocer and supplies food. Some are chiropodists; some, barbers; some, tailors; some, physicians; etc. In every case it is a service to others.

Bringing the matter still lower, we see that the principle extends even to service of the dumb brutes. A horse cannot curry himself; and even a hog needs to be served—needs a trough, a bed, and food. We in turn are served by the brute creation. Whoever separates himself from this arrangement of service is getting away from his own good, and violating a Law of the Universe. Whoever gets to the place where he does no service, but has others to serve him, is to be pitied. He will be unhappy, be he ever so wealthy. Whoever would take this attitude would be arrogant and selfish, and his life would be devoid of beauty or of worth.

Service a Delight to the Christian

The true Christian enters into the spirit of service, as did his Master, and delights to do a good turn to any one as he has opportunity. If there are those who are helpless, who are sick, these are calls upon his services as he has ability and is able to lend a helping hand. We are to serve all men "as we have opportunity, especially those who are of the Household of Faith."

Where shall we draw the line? The answer is that we must use moderation. We find ourselves every day passing by services that others have needed, but that we have not been able to perform. How then shall we regulate the matter, since we cannot do all that we would? Our own family should be our first charge, or responsibility. He who neglects his own is worse than an unbeliever. Charity begins at home. If we have responsibilities there, we could not give so much comfort, so much time, so much money, to others as we would to those of our own family.

Laziness Not To Be Encouraged

Those who have money have a talent that they can use in doing good. They will not find very much opportunity so far as the world is concerned. Even if we had millions of dollars, the spirit of a sound mind should govern us in its expenditure. To give money to encourage anybody in wastefulness, slothfulness and idleness would be to misuse it, and not to do good. God Himself declared, "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread." The happiest people are those who are employed; the most unhappy are those who have nothing to do, those who have no ambition.

We cannot do even for our own families all that we would wish to do; for in the case of our own there is often a lack of appreciation. Some of our relatives would never have enough. We could never do sufficient for them. We should exercise the spirit of a sound mind, then, in deciding what to do. Let us ever remember that when we have entered the service of the Lord we are given a new commission, a special work to do. . . .

We may ask, Does this excuse us, Lord, from doing anything for our fellowmen and for our own families? He answers that we should not neglect our own families, but should care for them according to their necessities. We are, however, to guide our affairs with economy. If our family fail to do their part, and will not put forth any effort when of sufficient age and able to earn a livelihood for themselves, then we are to do nothing for them; for having their own strength, they do not need our assistance. We are to do for them only the things that are needful. We believe this is the mind of the Lord.

Our Responsibility as Stewards

While we are to do good to all men, yet our special service is to be rendered in the Lord's work, the work of the Father. But while we are so doing, we may be able to speak a kind word to those with whom we come in contact. If we have money we may help in that way. But we should remember that we do not own even a penny of what we possess, or a moment of our time. All belongs to the Lord and should be spent along the lines of spiritual things, except where there is real necessity along earthly lines. To be sure, the world will not esteem us so much as if we would do more along earthly lines; but we have not received our commission from the world.

We perceive that the spirit of the Lord Jesus has had great influence in the world. It has made a deep impression upon noble souls, and has led them to the establishment of Orphans' Homes, Hospitals for the blind, Homes for the incurable, etc., and these institutions are provided for by the public. It is recognized today to be proper to provide for those unable to provide for themselves. Since the world has settled this matter from a business point of view, the Lord's people are excused from personal responsibility which they have as God's ambassadors. It is the proper thing to care for the sick and the maimed; but because the city and state have provided, individual responsibility is largely lifted.

There are wealthy people who say, I prefer to look after my sick friends myself, and send them to a high-priced institution. If any do so, this is their own business. They may also say, I prefer to live in a million dollar house. This, too, is their own business. They have a right to do so: and they may also have their automobiles and private yachts for pleasure, etc. But with the Christian it is different. All he possesses belongs to the Lord. He therefore is in a different position from any others. He is not to be like the world. All that he does is for God—because of his relationship to Him as a son. "Now are we the sons of God."

The Humble To Be Exalted

In the words of our text, the Master was instructing His disciples that they should not desire to rule—that He desired as His followers those who had most of His spirit of humility and service. If any man were to exalt himself, they were to have correspondingly a lower esteem for him; for "He that exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted." The Lord will send the experiences which will exalt or abase, and it is for us to show our appreciation where we see the right principles in operation. Whoever manifests most of the Spirit of Christ is to be highest in our esteem. Whoever has less of the Spirit of Christ is to be lower in our esteem. These characteristics are to be quietly observed by us.

The basis upon which the world operates is selfishness. This is the secret of war, rebellion, revolution, etc.—one party and another seeking selfishly to control riches, honor, power or authority. We are delighted, as Christians, to note the difference in the spirit which we are of. We are to remember that we are by nature "children of wrath even as others." We are not to suppose that we shall be changed instantly; but the mind will be changed, we shall grow more Christlike. And as New Creatures in Christ we are to keep a diligent watch lest the service we are so desirous of rendering to the Lord become vitiated more or less, after the fashion of the spirit of the world.

The Millennial Reign a Service

Our Lord, when He takes His great power to reign, will not have the same motive as have the rulers of the present time—merely to assume power for His own glory and for vaunting Himself. He will, indeed, have great power and authority, but it will be in harmony with what the Heavenly Father has arranged. It will be a manifestation of glory and power, not to crush the world, but to bless and uplift it. This work will be accomplished from the standpoint of service, with a view to helping mankind to be the real rulers of the world; for the Messianic Kingdom will cease when the world shall be able to take care of itself.

We perceive that this is the way it was purposed from the first. The Heavenly Father made man the king of earth. God crowned man with glory and honor, and set him over the works of His hands.

(Psalm 8:5, 6; Hebrews 2:7.) It is not His purpose to keep mankind under the iron rod forever. The rod will be merely for temporary service, for man's true development, that the race may be brought back to the full blessing of their original privilege as kings of earth.

The Lord's Kingdom, we see, will be very different from any other ever instituted. Our service, as members of Christ's Body, will be the same as His. We shall share with Him in the uplifting of humanity. "God hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in Heavenly places in Christ Jesus; that in the ages to come He might show the exceeding riches of His grace in His kindness toward us through Christ Jesus."—Ephesians 2:6, 7; Z. '14: 6-8.

Desire and Choose

1 Kings 3:4-15.

Golden Text:—"The reverence of Jehovah is the beginning of wisdom."—Prov. 9:10.

KING SOLOMON began his reign with a reverent heart, as evinced by his offering sacrifices at Gibeon. In this he evidenced the faithfulness of our Golden Text, which prepared his heart for the blessings which he subsequently received of the Lord. We note the wide difference between his attitude and that of his two brothers, who had sought the throne of Israel in an ambitious spirit and in a traitorous manner. So far as the record shows Solomon manifested in this matter a proper respect for the Lord and his Divine appointments. In this he may be considered an illustration of our Lord Jesus and of the Church, which is his Body; even as Absalom's career corresponded to the course of Satan and all those who follow his disobediently ambitious course.

Possessed of reverence for the Lord and acknowledging him before all the people as the real Ruler of Israel, and by sacrifice confessing him as Israel's Ruler, the young king was in just the right attitude of heart to receive a blessing. He slept—he dreamed. Whether the dream was the outworking of his own devotion of heart and the Lord's response to it or whether the Lord, noticing his teachable attitude of mind, gave the dream as a lesson respecting Solomon's proper course, none can say, because the matter is not revealed: but, at all events, the young king had a most beautiful dream, which, in view of later developments, can be considered only as a true reflection of Solomon's attitude of heart.

He dreamed that he was in the presence of the Almighty, who graciously inquired what were his desires. Solomon's answer was a most humble one. It intimates that he realized that it was not of any worthiness or merit of his own that God's favor was thus indicated, that it was merely the continuation of the Divine mercy which for years had blessed his father, King David, "according as he walked before thee in truth and in righteousness and in uprightness of heart with thee; and thou hast kept for him this great kindness, that thou hast given him a son to sit on his throne, as it is this day." (1 Kings 3:6.) How beautiful an adornment is humility! The fact that few possess it should make it all the more estimable to us. It is like salt to our food. It adds a blessing to every other grace and talent we may possess.

"I Am But a Little Child"

We have nothing to indicate that Solomon ever became very haughty, proud, though he certainly would have been a marvelous man had his great wisdom and honor and wealth not affected in some degree the childlike simplicity which he expressed to the Lord in this dream, saying, "O Lord my God, thou hast made thy servant king instead of David my father; and I am but a little child; I know not how to go out or come in [how to conduct myself in public or in private before the people]. And thy servant is in the midst of thy people which thou hast chosen, a great people, that cannot be numbered nor counted for multitude. Give thy servant, therefore, an understanding heart to judge thy people, that I may discern between good and evil: for who is able to judge this thy great people."—Vs. 7-9.

The simplicity of this prayer is beautiful. In it Solomon recognized his own littleness and need of assistance and God's greatness and ability to help. He recognized also that the people were not his, but God's; and that he was not really the king, but God's servant appointed to judge or rule the people according to Divine standards. He recognized that good might appear evil and evil might appear good to his imperfect judgment; and his prayer, therefore, was for wisdom; not that he might be reputed the wisest man in the world, nor for any other selfish purpose or ambition, but that as God's servant he might faithfully and wisely administer the duties of his office, and honor God and bless his fellow Israelites. . . .

"The Speech Pleased Jehovah"

We do not wonder that the record shows that the Lord was pleased with his choice—because Solomon asked neither long life, nor riches, nor the lives of his enemies, but something far better—wisdom. Then, just as we might expect, with our present knowledge of the Lord's bounty and mercy and generosity, Jehovah declared to Solomon that his request for wisdom was granted, but that with it he would add riches and honor above those of any other human being of his day; and he promised also that if Solomon would continue in this way he would lengthen his days, give him an increase beyond the limitations of his natural powers.

When Solomon awoke and found that it was but a dream, doubtless there was a measure of disappointment in connection with it, but it brought before his mind, clearly and distinctly, just the condition of heart and mind most pleasing to the Lord. And be it remembered that for a considerable number of years Solomon maintained his humble attitude of heart and faithfulness to God. He returned to Jerusalem and there, through the agency of the priest, made various additional offerings and sacrifices to the Lord, the flesh of the peace-offerings constituting a feast for his servants, including many of the royal citizens. Thus was his reign reverently and wisely inaugurated and the foundation laid for his personal prosperity and that of the nation, which, as God's representative, he both ruled and served.

Lessons From This Story For Our Day

The word opportunity signifies "standing at the door." We have seen how great opportunities stood at Solomon's door and how he embraced them. Similarly opportunities stood at the door of his two brothers and they embraced them for sin and treason. Let us note that opportunities for good and for evil come to all of us at some time and it is for us to decide which we will grasp. But before the opportunity, comes the desire. If the desires be impure, an evil opportunity in harmony therewith will be found. If the desires be good, noble, true, loyal, opportunities in harmony with these will come to us. The thought to be impressed upon our minds, therefore, is that the desires of our hearts should be noble in every respect, and that all ignoble desires be studiously and promptly set aside, to the intent that only the good opportunities may come to us. But desire and opportunity are not enough. Many a man has had both and gotten nothing. When the good desires have been cultivated and developed and by and by a noble opportunity stands before us, then comes the responsibility of seizing it—decision. Probably more people make failure of life at this juncture than at any other.

Our counsel to the worldly would be along these lines: That first they should have noble ambitiions; that they should resist all others; that they should be on the lookout for opportunities in harmony with their noblest sentiments and should seize them with all the energy of their being, when they come within their reach, and should never let them go. It is worthy of note, too, that very few are so meanly born or unfavorably environed that they are utterly devoid of noble principles or incompetent of discernment as between these and ignoble ones. True, born in sin and shapen in iniquity, and surrounded by others in similar conditions, none can help it if ignoble suggestions come to his mind. But it is within his power to exercise his will to resist the evil suggestion and bid it be gone and to entertain only noble, pure, true sentiments. This is illustrated by the adage which declares that "We cannot help crows flying over our heads, but we can prevent them from building nests in our hair."

The difficulty is that where an affinity exists between the evil suggestions and the fallen nature, the will may not be prompt enough to rid itself of the intrusion. The battle of the will, therefore, is not merely with the crow thoughts that desire to nest with us, but additionally the wrong disposition which desires the crow company. A child's hand was stuck in the narrow mouth of a vase. He called for aid and the father suggested, "Open your hand loosely." "I know," replied the child, "that if I do that, I'll drop my penny." The thought is that to release ourselves from the power of sin requires such an exercise of the will as would enable us to drop the cost of our release, "the pleasures of sin for a season."

The Need of Christ Within

Our Lord gave a parable respecting a man possessed of an evil spirit who got rid of it and got his heart swept and garnished—but empty. By and by the evil spirit took with him seven others more wicked than himself and they overpowered him and his last end was worse than the first. A valuable lesson can be drawn from this. It illustrates that under present adverse conditions we are unable to keep ourselves, and that even if we were relieved from the power of sin, even if we were justified freely from all the sins that are past, we would be unable to keep ourselves—the world, the flesh and the Adversary in manifold forms will surely overpower our good resolutions and desires for purity and uprightness. What we need is an occupant for our hearts—the Divine One. If Christ be enthroned in our hearts, if our wills be turned over to him in full submission, he is able to keep our hearts, to guard our hearts. Respecting such he says, the Father and myself will come in to them and abide with them. Oh, the security this implies! Let us not forget that the will is the doorkeeper of the heart and that the Lord's presence will not remain except as we will to have it, and that if we admit to our hearts evil thoughts, evil surmisings, the Lord will not hear us, will not abide with us, but will proportionately vacate and leave room for more and more of the evil influences to enter into us and to possess us.

Hence the admonition, "Keep your hearts in the love of God." The Evil One and entrenched sins will endeavor to remain in our hearts and fight against our wills. But not so with righteousness and the laws of God. These are easily offended and easily driven out. Hence with the Psalmist we should pray, "Oh, Lord! take not thy holy Spirit from me." Remember also the exhortation of the Apostle, "Grieve not the holy Spirit with which ye are sealed unto the day of redemption."

If we know these things, happy are we if we act upon them. Happy are we if we realize the primary necessity for good desires and for the rejection of evil desires. Happy are we if, when the message of God's grace came to us as an opportunity of return to his favor, we promptly embraced and received at his hands justification by faith, through the merit of the precious blood. Happy are we if being thus swept and garnished and delivered from the power of the Adversary, we promptly recognized our obligation to the Giver of all blessing and sought relationship with him. Happy are we if, learning of his willingness to accept the keys of our hearts, to accept our will, we should give it to him fully, completely, forever! Happy are we if we maintain this same attitude of heart-purity and desire for the Lord's will instead of our own, and if more and more we allow the Spirit of the Lord to fill every nook and corner of our hearts and to drive out, not only sin, but every worldly ambition, that we may be fully and wholly possessed by the Spirit of our Lord, the holy Spirit! Happy are we if we continue to manifest meekness, gentleness, patience, long-suffering, goodness, brotherly kindness, peace, love, so that anything which would mar this heavenly bliss or quench this holy flame or offend our Master or lose us his smile, would be considered as indescribable disaster! Happy are we if the joys of the Lord thus continue in our hearts and rule our lives and make us joyful in our pilgrimage towards the heavenly city and its glories! Happy are we as we find the Spirit of the Lord working out through hands and feet and tongue and every power to glorify the name of our Redeemer and to bless his children and as many others as possible of the groaning creation!

Joint-Heirs With Christ

Dear fellow-members of the Royal Priesthood, in a certain sense we already have received the anointing of the Great King, which constitutes us in an embryotic sense the Kings and Priests of the future. We are at the threshold of a great work. We are to be associates with our Lord in the Kingdom, that we may be his assistants in conferring Divine blessings upon all the families of the earth. Our position, therefore, is not so unlike that of Solomon. We, like him, have turned aside from service for a time that we may offer sacrifices to the Lord. Each has a sacrifice to bring, his justified self, his will, his time, his influence, his talents. Now is the time of our dream. Now is the time when the Lord has appeared to us, revealing himself to the eyes of our understanding through his Word. He invites us to choose. He wishes us to see of what spirit we are. Day by day we are making choice, either wisely or unwisely. And day by day he is taking note of those who make a wise choice, as did Solomon.

Do we ask for long life by seeking chiefly self-preservation? Do we ask for riches by giving the best of our time and talent to their accumulation? Or do we ask for triumphs and trials of an earthly kind over others? If we ask any of these things or all of them, as some seem to do, we are not choosing the better part, and the Lord will sooner or later advise us that our choice is not pleasing to him. Are we day by day seeking at the Lord's hand and through his Word an understanding heart, that we may know his will and obediently follow his instruction? If so, we are choosing wisely, reverently—"The secret of the Lord is with them that reverence him, and he will show them his Covenant."

Our desire to know the secret of the Lord should be two-fold: (1) That we may fill the office and service to which he has so graciously called us; and (2) that we may be prepared in his providence for the blessing of all with whom he will bring us in contact, not only in the present life, but also in that which is to come. It should be our desire, as it was Solomon's, to realize our own littleness, our own unworthiness of so great an honor; to realize that we have the Divine favor only because of our relationship to the typical David, the Beloved, our Redeemer. We are reminded of our Saviour's words, "Except ye become as little children ye can in no wise enter into the Kingdom of God." Here again is the thought of simplicity and humility and teachableness, and not the thought of littleness of stature or immaturity of judgment. The thought of what we have been called to, in the Lord's providence, in connection with his Kingdom, should lead us to be very humble in the present time, to learn all the lessons which our heavenly Father would give to those who shall be associated with him in his Kingdom, "To the called according to his purpose."

All of the Lord's people are sheep. All are under the Good Shepherd. But amongst the sheep he has appointed some to measurably represent him and to assist and guide the sheep in right paths. These may get the special blessing from this lesson by applying the suggestions to some extent to their present relationship to the people of God. None of the elders of the Church of Christ should ever be heard saying, "My people!" "My flock!" "My Church!" "My congregation!" Rather in humility he should be feeling himself as a little child needing the Divine wisdom to guide, direct, feed the Lord's people, whose interests are so great, so momentous, and the corresponding need of assistance on the way to the Kingdom.

To all who thus choose, to all whose hearts are firmly fixed unwaveringly upon these principles and desires, the Lord declares his approval and assures them that while now granting them the desires of their hearts in respect to wisdom and knowledge, he will by and by give them still more wisdom and, in addition, riches and honor and length of days—eternal life.—Z. '08; 363-365.

Our Cleansing—Inward and Outward

"Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."—2 Corinthians 7:1.

AGAIN we call attention to the fact that the Bible was not addressed to the world, but to the Church; not to unbelievers, but to believers; not to sinners, but to those who have already turned away from sin. Many overlook this fact, and the result is a confusion of their minds.

But some may, perhaps, be inclined to say that the words of our text are applicable to sinners as well as saints—sinners especially—even though the Epistle itself is addressed "unto the Church of God which is at Corinth, with all the saints, who are in the whole of Achaia." We answer, No! our text cannot appropriately be applied to sinners in general, who have not yet come to God, who have not yet repented of their sins and been forgiven. God makes no appeals to such; He merely denounces them as sinners and refuses them all recognition, all fellowship, and tells them that there is no other name given under Heaven amongst men whereby they can be saved from their sins than that of Jesus—through faith in His blood. In other words, God refuses to have any dealings whatsoever with those who cannot or will not accept of the great Sin-Offering which He has provided. As Jesus expressed the matter, "No man cometh unto the Father but by Me."—John 14:6. . . .

God's Beloved Disesteemed

As the mouthpiece of the Lord the Apostle addresses all believers who have fled away from sin and who are striving to be pleasing and acceptable to God, as "dearly beloved." The Apostle, a noble-minded man himself, appreciated the fact that many of these dearly beloved brethren had weaknesses and imperfections of the flesh. He did not love them **on account of** these blemishes, but **in spite of** them—because at heart they were loyal to the principles of righteousness and striving to overcome sin and its inclinations in their own mortal flesh, and—so far as their influence would go—in the world. But the world does not love these whom the Father loves, whom Jesus loves, whom the Apostle loves. Our Master's words are, "If the world hate you, ye know that it hated Me before it hated you. If ye were of the world, the world would love its own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hateth you. Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you and have ordained you, that ye should go and bring forth fruit, that your fruit should be permanent."—John 15:16, 18, 19.

The world does not like these chosen ones because, confessing their own weaknesses and striving against them, they call them by their proper names—sins, meannesses, filthinesses of the flesh and spirit. Every effort made by these to cleanse themselves is a reproof to others who are not striving to cleanse themselves, and who hate to be reminded that the things in which they take their greatest pleasure are greed, selfishness, inordinate affections, strifes, pride, vainglory. Whoever is fully satisfactory to the world may be sure that he is not satisfactory to the Lord. Whoever is satisfactory to the Lord need not expect to be satisfactory to the world; for the fellowship of this world is enmity to God, and, therefore, the world is not subject to the Divine standard, neither indeed can be, as the Apostle explains. (James 4:4; Romans 8:7.) Its heart is in the other direction.

The law of the New Creation—love for God with all our hearts and for our neighbor as ourselves—is to the world unreasonable, unthinkable, undesirable every way, and every reminder of it, even by the presence of those who at heart are on the side of righteousness, causes displeasure and discomfort. To these the Lord and His footstep followers have always been unwelcome—intruders. They prefer to be let alone, to have no suggestion offered to the effect that they are wrong. True, some of them have a pleasurable pride in generosity, a love of a good name, and a reputation for honesty and virtue. But they wish to be considered as standards and exemplars, and resent any intrusion, any measurements of their thoughts, words or deeds by the Divine standards. Therefore those who continually recognize and honor the Divine standards are disesteemed by them.

The Necessity for Cleansing

But why should the Apostle suggest that the Church should do a cleansing work in their hearts and in their flesh when we find that God has wholly covered these blemishes from His sight? If the blemishes are covered, why trouble about them further? Ah, there are the best of reasons! Those who at heart are loyal to the Lord and His righteousness are distressed by their blemishes, their sins, the weaknesses of their flesh, even though they are aware that the Lord has graciously covered all these, and is not imputing their guilt because at heart they are opposed to them. The desire of this class is to build, to establish, character by faithfulness to principles of righteousness. They wish that their minds may become more and more established in faithfulness to the Lord and His Golden Rule of love; and that, so far as possible, the new mind shall control the fallen, imperfect flesh and bring it into subjection, into accord, with the Divine Law of Love.

Whoever, after having experienced the Lord's blessing in the forgiveness of sins, has no desire to war a warfare against them, and to bring into subjection to his new mind the powers and talents of his mortal body, has not the true spirit of sonship. He would thereby be giving evidence that he does not truly love righteousness, and that he does not truly hate iniquity. He would thus be testifying that he is not of the class whom the Lord desires as His sons on the spirit plane—as members of the Little Flock, the Bride, the Lamb's Wife.

We see, then, good reason why the brethren should be appealed to by the Apostle in our text. We see a good reason why all begotten by the same Spirit of holiness should give heed to his words and make the cleansing of the flesh and of the spirit **the principal work of the remainder of life.** We see that unless they do this, they will belie their pretensions of love for righteousness and hatred of iniquity. We see that by such a warfare against the weaknesses of the flesh and of the spirit, the Lord designs that they should establish a crystallized character. Thus as the Scriptures express it, they shall be "made meet for the inheritance of the saints in light"—fit in heart for the Divine service. Such as are thus fit in heart for the service of the Millennial Kingdom will, we are assured, be granted new bodies, free from all blemishes, in the First Resurrection. Thus, having perfected their minds and established character in their hearts in the present life by controlling the flesh so far as possible, they demonstrate that at heart they have the character-likeness of their Lord and Redeemer. Only those who do thus develop into copies of God's dear Son will constitute the Very Elect, the Kingdom Class, the Seed of Abraham, through whom the world will shortly receive its blessing.

"Let Us Cleanse Ourselves"

The words, "Let us cleanse ourselves," do not have reference to our getting rid of Adamic condemnation. Such cleansing from original sin is impossible on our part, as the Apostle elsewhere explains. We cannot have it unless we receive it as a free gift from God. In what sense, then, do we cleanse ourselves? We answer that having been reckonedly cleansed by the Lord, and brought under the influence of His Holy Spirit and the enlightening understanding of His Word, we are now invited to show our zeal for righteousness and to co-operate with Him in the work. While all the condemnation is reckoned as having passed from us, we still have the opportunity of showing the Lord what our spirit, our intention, would be, by striving against sin in our minds and in our flesh. The **incentive** to this cleansing is of the **Lord**, but the cleansing **itself** is something for **us** to do—"Let us cleanse **ourselves.**" The cleansing work is a tedious one; for at first we did not discern how deeply defiled we were, how nearly all the suggestions of the mind were selfish. We did not even recognize selfishness as being sin.

As the eyes of our understanding opened more and more widely we got proper views of the Lord and His righteousness, our own conditions, the need of His covering Robe, etc. Day by day, as we have since striven to put away sin, selfishness—yea, every element of ungodliness and unloveliness—we have become more painfully conscious of how deep was the stain which we at first, perhaps, thought was merely superficial. Many of the Lord's people, after years of labor in seeking to cleanse themselves from the filth of the flesh and of the spirit, now, alas, see more of their own blemishes than they discerned at first, even though they have gotten rid of much of this natural filthiness, selfishness, etc. This would make the work of cleansing a very discouraging one if it were not for the assurance of the Lord's Word that He regards us, not according to the flesh, but according to our intentions, our desires, our endeavors. He reckons us as overcomers because of our good **warfare against the natural blemishes,** whatever may be the measure of our success.

The distinction which the Apostle draws between the filthiness of the flesh and that of the spirit should be noticed. After we have accepted the Lord, we take our stand with Him as the Captain of our Salvation, to be soldiers of the Cross and to fight a good fight against sin and all the works of the flesh and of the Devil. Soon we find ourselves in company with others of the same class, and naturally and properly begin to cleanse the flesh, to put away evil practises, outward wrongdoing of every kind. This is well. What fellowship could there be between children of the light and any works of darkness? Before long, in the case of many, a considerable outward change is manifested—careless language is avoided, passions are restrained, selfishness is curbed, at least in its outward manifestations. Neighbors and friends may see a considerable change. This is **good,** but not **sufficient.** We must also cleanse our **spirits,** our **minds.** It is not sufficient that we avoid **outward** wrongdoing. Our **minds** must be cleansed. We must learn to hate sin, to repel its first advances. We must learn that our minds and our bodies are the temples of the Lord and that everything contrary to Him and His Law of Righteousness and Love must be barred.

Others are witnesses to some extent of our trials and triumphs of an outward kind. But the most important battles of the New Creation are those which are known only to ourselves and to our Captain—the battle of the new **mind** or **will** against the influences of the old, natural disposition. The true soldier of the cross will find this battle-ground quite sufficient to engage all of his combativeness and destructiveness and to keep him fully occupied. Such as are on the alert to develop the new character have much less time than others to criticize their neighbors, friends and brethren. They find enough in themselves requiring vigilance and restraint. And as they progress in this direction, they become more sympathetic toward others who have the same or other weaknesses and inclinations contrary to the Divine standards. They sympathize especially with the brethren of the New Creation, who similarly have given their all to the Lord and are battling against the world, the flesh and the Adversary, in their bodies and in their spirits.

Our Gradual Transformation

Those who have already come into relationship to the Father as children should remember that God's promises are that we shall be more and more received into His fellowship, have more and more of His blessing, in proportion as we are loyal to these principles with which we started out. If we have turned away from the world and from sin, and find that we have certain contaminations of the flesh, we should put all these away—even the taints of sin we should seek to put away. The more we energize ourselves in this direction, the more of God's favor shall we have, the more shall we be pleasing and acceptable to Him.

The Apostle in pointing out that there is filthiness of the flesh and the spirit, does not mean that the New Creature is filthy. The New Creature, as we are elsewhere told, is undefiled. The New Creature is holy. The word **spirit** is frequently used to represent mind. The **will** must be thoroughly changed before one can become a New Creature at all. And for the will ever to draw back would mean a drawing back unto perdition. To have a will for sin would mean that we had lost the Holy Spirit; that we are in the Second Death.

But the Lord's children have this new will, this new treasure, in an earthen vessel. We have a natural disposition toward sin. Additionally, we have minds that, even though they are **putting away** the things of sin, have more or less **recollection** of the things of sin, the impurities of sin. So while we draw ourselves away from that which is sinful, we are to strive also to have our minds pure. We are to cast out everything in us that is sympathetic with sin. We are not to think of those things, we are not to permit ourselves to ruminate on what is sinful. We are to set our affection on things above. —Colossians 3:2.

As we fill our minds with God's promises, the whole character, the whole life, becomes more transformed. The Apostle says, "Be ye transformed by the renewing of your minds." Our minds which were in accord with the earthly things, the earthly nature, are not only to be lifted from obedience to sin, but are to be turned in a new direction. Our minds are to be filled with holy thoughts—thoughts of the Lord and His service. When the mind is in a right attitude toward God, it is comparatively easy to serve the Law of God. The Apostle exhorts us to **perfect** holiness. We had the holiness started in us when we became the Lord's people. We gave ourselves **wholly to Him**—He never accepts a **part.** Our consecration is to do God's will wholly. We present our bodies a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is our reasonable service. We started out saints; and the Lord recognizes none others than saints. Therefore we are to seek to live up to the Divine standard in all the conduct of life—our words, deeds, thoughts.

Our Cleansing and the Lord's Cleansing

But this perfecting of holiness goes on, this cleansing of ourselves, noticing to see where there is anything in us that is impure, and putting all that away from our conduct—and, more than that, putting it away from our **minds.** As we do this, holiness spreads through all the avenues of life. And so a Christian ought to have a very beautiful character. If any Christian has not a beautiful character, it shows that he has not been properly attending to the matter of his cleansing, daily giving attention to his purification in his outward relationship to mankind, and inwardly in his relationship toward God.

We are to do all this in the fear of the Lord, the reverence of the Lord. There is a difference between the fear that is reverential and the fear that is slavish. The reverential fear is a profitable fear. We are not to fear our Heavenly Father as if He were a devil, who would turn on us and treat us with cruelty; but we are to have a godly fear, which will delight to do those things pleasing and acceptable in His sight. So all this cleansing of ourselves, all this perfecting of ourselves in holiness, is with a view to being perfected in the fear of the Lord. Having begotten us of His Holy Spirit, having given us these precious promises, God will expect us not to put our talents into a napkin and make no progress, but to bring forth fruit—some thirty-fold, some sixty-fold, some a hundred-fold. And as we do this, we shall be rewarded in proportion.

There is another Scripture which speaks of the **Lord** as doing this cleansing work. "Cleanse **Thou** me from secret faults." (Psalm 19:12-14.) These words of the Prophet David are the sentiment of all the Lord's true people. By these words the Prophet showed his recognition of the fact that he was not capable of cleansing himself. He recognized that he might have secret faults that he did not appreciate himself—that he did not see himself. Perhaps he did not see some faults that others would see. He desired God to cleanse him from these. This indicated that he desired to get away from everything that was not in harmony with God.

This would be the proper sentiment for all Christians. We should pray to the Lord that He would show us whatever in our lives is not fully pleasing and acceptable to Him, that He would help us to see ourselves as others see us, and especially to see ourselves as He sees us. We believe that many of the Lord's people have been shown their imperfections and weaknesses (in the Lord's providence) by a very severe jolt. We ask the Lord also, as did the Psalmist, to keep us back from presumptuous sins, to cleanse us wholly from these.

"The Perfecting of Holiness"

Our text declares that such a purification of flesh and spirit, body and mind, constitutes a perfecting of holiness. The thought here is that holiness cannot be attained in a moment, but that it must be gradually effected, perfected. A right view of this matter will hinder us from falling into certain dangerous errors. Holiness is not a charm which we may put in our pockets; it is not a garment which may be worn occasionally. Holiness resembles more the tempering of a piece of metal; it enters into the entire fiber, changing its general characteristics; it is transforming in its influence. True, there is a holiness **reckoned** to the Lord's people in the Robe of Christ's righteousness, which is granted to us when first we turn from sin, accept the Redeemer, and consecrate ourselves to God. But this is not sufficient. We must work into our characters that which we have willed—or, as the Apostle expresses it, we must allow the Lord to work in us the holy will, and the holy conduct which must necessarily accompany the holy will, as opportunity and conditions will permit.

But how is this holiness perfected in us? How does God work in us to will and then to do His good pleasure? Our text answers this portion of the question, too, assuring us that it is God's part to give us the promises; and that these promises constitute the incentives to those who are in the right attitude of mind. Without these Divine promises of the present and the future blessings, who would battle against his own weaknesses? Who would strenuously resist the attacks of the world and of the Adversary? Moreover, who would willingly sacrifice his life and all his natural rights to serve the Lord and His cause, if there were no exceeding great and precious promises to quicken and energize him to the service of the King, in battling against sin, in assisting all who are on the side of righteousness? Surely there would be few, if any at all. And so our text intimates, saying, "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves," etc. The promises are indeed the power of God unto our cleansing—our salvation—as pointed out by St. Paul.—Romans 1:16.

"Great and Precious Promises"

Looking into the context to see to what promises the Apostle refers, we find in the preceding verses the declaration, "Come out from among them and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing, and I will receive you and will be a Father unto you, and ye shall be my sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." (2 Corinthians 6:17, 18.) What a promise! What a suggestion!—that we, by nature defiled and imperfect, should not only have the notice of our sovereign Creator, but should be invited to become His children and be given the assurance of His parental affection for us—that "like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that reverence Him." How wonderful it seems! And then, as the Apostle elsewhere declares this is not the end of the matter, but merely the beginning, for he says, "If children, then heirs, heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ, if so be that we suffer with Him, that we may be also glorified together."—Rom. 8:17.

Yes, it is this thought of what is implied in the term children of God, sons of God. The blessings and riches of the Father are to be extended through our Lord Jesus, especially to the Little Flock, selected from amongst men to be His Bride and associates in the Kingdom. These are not accepted into the Kingdom at once, but as it were on probation; as the Apostle says, "Now are we the sons of God; but it doth not yet appear what we shall be"—if we are faithful. As sons of God in the present life we have the joy of knowing of our Father's character through His Word, which we are permitted to understand, but which the world does not understand. We are assured of Divine supervision; so that not the slightest thing can happen to these sons except as their Father sees would be to their advantage. But they must show their love, their devotion, their oneness of spirit with the Father and the Redeemer ere they can be counted in as His Bride in the full, absolute and complete sense, and be granted a share in His glories.

It is to demonstrate their possession of these graces that these consecrated ones are left for a time in the midst of evil and unfavorable surroundings—to prove their love of righteousness, their opposition to iniquity, their love to God and their faithfulness to Him, their love to all who are in sympathy with the Divine arrangement. If they stand these tests fully, it will mean that they will endure considerable opposition from the world, the flesh and the Adversary; and that they will be correspondingly strengthened by these experiences. It is this class to whom the Apostle refers saying, "If so be that we suffer [with Him], we shall also reign with Him." We are to suffer as He did for right doing, and because our neighbors and friends are blind as to what is the right, the proper course. We are to suffer gladly and joyfully whatever cup the Father may pour for us, knowing that He is too good to be unkind, too wise to err.

"Let us then, dearly beloved, cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of the Lord." As the Apostle Peter declares, "If we do these things, we shall never fall; for so an entrance shall be ministered unto us abundantly into the everlasting Kingdom of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.—2 Peter 1:10, 11; Z. '15:230-233.

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He will leave no true son without chastisements, disciplines, neither will he forsake us in our trials, but will stand with us so that we shall not be tempted above that we are able.—Z. '99:13.

◇

COURAGE IN THIS "HOUR OF TEMPTATION"

Coming down to our own day, there never was a time when more strength of character and more courage were needed than just now. The iniquities of the whole world, and especially of so-called Christendom, have now about come to the full. . . . Our strength will be tried—our hold upon God and upon the Truth, and our courage in defending the Truth. These will surely be put to the test; for Babylon is opposing our way. God will not have any in the Kingdom who have not faithfully endured. . . . We do not know in what form some of our trials and tribulations will come. But we who are living in this "evil day," yea, in the very close of this day—in the final "hour of temptation"—surely need to have on the whole armor of God. We need to have our loins girt about with **Truth**; we need the helmet to protect our minds, our intellects, from the shafts of error; we need the breastplate of righteousness; we need the Sword of the Spirit—the broad two-edged Sword; we need the sandals of "preparation of the Gospel of Peace." We need all these to overcome the Canaanites in our own breast, and to overcome all the surrounding obstacles.

Thus armored and furnished, we may indeed come off "more than conquerors" in the great conflict, which is daily increasing. We shall conquer "through Him who loved us and bought us with His own precious blood." Let the promise of the Master be our daily inspiration: "To him that overcometh will I grant to sit with Me in My Throne."—Z. '15:181, 182.

◇

We hold that the Lord's Church, the only one to which the name **ecclesia**, body or church, is properly applicable, is so insignificant, so unostentatious, and comparatively so poor in this world's riches, that it is not recognized nor recognizable from the worldly standpoint. It is neither man-made nor man-ruled; nor are its members enrolled on earth, but in heaven. (Heb. 12:23.) Its head and bishop is the Lord, its law is his Word; it has but one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism; and it is built upon the testimonies of the holy apostles and prophets—Jesus Christ himself being its chief corner-stone.—Z. '99:37.

◇

Justice is excellent, Wisdom is valuable, punishments are necessary, but above all, "Love is the principal thing." Let us, therefore, judge ourselves along the lines of this divine standard—our acts, our words, our very thoughts. Whatever acts, words or thoughts will not fully square with the purest of love will be injurious to us as well as to those upon whom they are exercised.—Z. '08:344.

◇

It is undoubtedly true that persons whose minds are in sympathetic accord with righteousness and truth, are proportionately surrounded by a protective influence which shields them from the intrusion of the evil spirits. This is the intimation of the Scriptures, which declare that the holy angels are ministering spirits for those who shall be heirs of salvation, and "The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him and delivereth them." (Heb. 1:14; Psa. 34:7.) But with any departure from the reverence of the Lord, with any departure from loyalty to righteousness and truth would come a corresponding separation from this holy protecting influence of the angels of the Lord and a consequent exposure of heart, of mind, to the malevolent influences of the fallen angels, who are ever ready to enter into such, and more seriously than ever defile them. This lesson seems to be enforced by our Lord's parable of the man out of whom a devil had been cast and his heart swept and garnished; not, however, receiving into it the good Shepherd of his soul, but, standing for righteousness merely in his own strength, he was assaulted by seven demons more wicked than the first and was overcome, and the last end of that man was worse than the beginning.—Luke 11:24-26; Z. '08: 235-236.

◆

"Patient in tribulation." Our word tribulation is derived from the Latin **tribulum,** the name of a roller or threshing machine used in olden times for cleaning wheat, removing from it the outer husk or chaff. How appropriate the thought when applied to the Lord's consecrated people, who in the Scriptures are symbolized by wheat. Our new natures are the kernel, the real grain; yet this treasure or valuable part is covered with the husk of earthly conditions. And in order that the wheat may be made properly ready for the "garner" and for usefulness, it is necessary that each grain shall pass through the tribulation necessary to separate those qualities which, until separated, render us unfit for the future service to which we are called of the Lord. In proportion as we are able to realize our own imperfections, and the perfect will of God concerning us, we will be enabled to bear patiently, and even with a certain kind of rejoicing, all the tribulations which the Master shall see best to let come upon us. "We glory in tribulations also."—Rom. 5:3; Z. '97:265.

◆

Oh, how blessed to be the people of God! even in the present life the reward of his favor is beyond computation.—Z. '95:73.

◆

How disastrous may be the effects of unkindness or impatience or any lack of manifestation of the Master's spirit.—Z. '95:62.

◆

The thought that a certain standard or mark of character is necessary to all who will pass divine approval as "overcomers," and hear the Lord's "Well done!" is an astounding one to many. Many have thought of the Christian race as merely an avoidance of open sin; others have included an avoidance of secret faults; others have gone still further, and have included a general disposition to sacrifice many interests of the present life; others have gone still further, and have understood the test of discipleship to be full self-surrender to the Lord, a full sacrifice of earthly life and all of its interests to the will of our Head, the Lord;—**but almost none** have the thought that all our sacrificings and experiences and self-denials must lead up toward and eventually bring us to the "mark" of character which God has set for the "elect;"—else they will not get the prize of Joint-heirship with Christ in the Millennial Kingdom.—Z. '01:7.

◆

The Lord is not selecting the members of the Bride of Christ by an arbitrary election; neither is he selecting them on the lines of a mere sentimentality; he is selecting them on the lines of character, heart-development; and those who attain this likeness to his Son, this "mark" of the prize, this standard of what is pleasing and acceptable to the Father—these, and these alone, may have confident hope of joint-heirship with our Lord.—Z. '01:10.

◆

"SO AS BY FIRE"

"I sometimes feel so passionate a yearning
For spiritual perfection here below,
This vigorous frame with healthful fervour burning,
Seems my determined foe.

"So actively it makes a stern resistance,
So cruelly it sometimes wages war
Against the higher spiritual existence,
Which I am striving for.

"It interrupts my soul's intense devotions;
Some hope it strangles at its very birth
With a swift rush of violent emotions
Which link me to the earth.

"It is as if two mortal foes contended
Within my bosom in a deadly strife;
One for the loftier aims Jesus intended,
One for the "Mammon" life.

"And yet I know this very war within me,
Which brings out all my will-power and control;
This very conflict yet through Christ shall win me
The loved and longed-for goal.

"And when in the immortal ranks enlisted,
Sometimes I wonder if we shall not find
That not for deeds alone, but also what's resisted,
Our places were assigned."—Z. '01:120.

◆

The Lord Almighty and the Lamb will always be an inner Temple in this great Temple, which God has provided for the world's blessing during restitution times.—Z. '01:202.

◆

He who has buried his own will completely in the will of the Lord can know no disappointment; but in every affair of his life he sees by faith, divine appointment or supervision, and hears the word of the Lord in all of life's affairs assuring him: "All things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to his purpose." (Rom. 8:28.) It is one of the evidences of reaching the graduating condition of heart, when we are able to take the oppositions of the great Adversary and of the world and of our own flesh **patiently,** uncomplainingly, unmurmuringly, "joyfully"—as a part of the disciplinary experience meted out to us by our all-wise and all-loving Lord. —Z. '99:6.

◆

Let us remember Moses on Mount Nebo looking across Jordan into the promised land—and preparing for his burial. Let us more and more realize that this should be our attitude: that as the body of Christ in the flesh we are soon to die, and that beyond the vail we will be New Creatures. **Let us remember that the mountain-top of Christian experience should now be our portion**, and that from thence the clear eye of faith should be able distinctly to discern the outlines of the glorious inheritance which the Lord hath in reservation for them that love him: the possession of which we are hoping so soon to share.—Z. '07:270.

It is ours as God's people to favor peace and righteousness and to live in harmony with these conditions. But it is ours also to know what is coming on the world—more, it is ours to know the outcome, to know something of God's Truth. The Lord has already given us an inward peace which no outward storm can affect. We are trusting in the promises He has given. We realize what the present condition is, and rejoice that the Church will soon be glorified. What a lasting peace and joy will then be ours beyond the veil! This realization brings into our hearts even now great rest of soul, a great calm! We remember that God is able to make **all things** work together for good to us, and He has **promised** so to do; therefore we may have blessed experiences coming out of these stormy times and trials of life.—Z. '15:163.

The Lord does not judge New Creatures according to the imperfections of their flesh, because these are **covered**. They will prove the measure of their love and loyalty by the way in which they fight against sin and the desires of the flesh, and especially against a rebellious spirit in their own flesh. —Z. '15:148.

One of the greatest lessons of life is to learn that one who spends considerable time in correcting others, even though it be properly done and well, is prone to forget **himself**. One's first duty is to **bring himself** into harmony with the Divine arrangement and to **keep himself** there.—Z. '15:26.

God's children have instructions from His Word on the subject of prayer. They are to come to the Father according to these instructions, not doubting His love, His Wisdom and His Power. They are to come with full confidence in Him as their Father, asking for the things for which He has bidden them to pray. Their trust in Him should be so absolute that they would know that He is ever seeking their very highest blessing, that all His instructions and leadings are to this end, and that He withholds nothing that would be for their good. —Z. '17:20.

It will be easier to get into the little flock than into the great company, so far as experiences are concerned. The difference between the two classes will consist not so much in the experiences as in the willingness to endure those experiences. As justified and consecrated children who endure whatever Divine providence may permit, **joyfully**, and who go about the Father's business, doing with their might what their hands find to do, counting it a joy to suffer persecution in his service, these will constitute the "little flock," the "overcomers," the "worthy." Those who hold back from such suffering, and who endure persecution unwillingly, and merely rather than deny the Lord, are the ones whom we may expect to find will pass through the great time of trouble, and be of the great company, who will wash their robes in the blood of the Lamb. —Z. '05:221, 222.

Some will not be amongst those who are gathered as jewels, because the jewels which the Lord will gather will be pure, "first-water" diamonds—stainless. They are to be faultless in love before the Father; and perfect love not only casts out fear, but casts out also selfishness, animosity, evil-surmisings and evil-speakings, as well as self-love, pride. O how beautiful will be the Lord's jewels!—Z. '98:368.

Jonah's disobedient course led to the sea where he took ship. Christ's sacrificial course (taking the sinner's place) brought him in contact with the Jewish people.

The Revelator tells us that water is a symbol of "peoples, nations and tongues."—Rev. 17:15.

The agitated waters in Jonah's case find a parallel in the lawless mob, which clamored for Christ's death. The air in motion (wind) which agitated the water may represent Satan, "the prince of the power of the air" (Eph. 2:2) which then had freedom to work (Luke 23:53). The ship, being at the mercy of the sea, may represent the Roman government, and the crew might represent Pilate; for as the crew prayed to be considered innocent for casting Jonah overboard, so Pilate washed his hands, declaring his innocence, being forced to deliver Christ to death.

If these premises be true, may they not also be applicable to some extent to all the members of Christ's body, who, like Christ, have been accused of being the real sinners, "turning the world upside down," named heretics all through the Gospel age, and one government after another, like the Roman, has been compelled by God's nominal people to exterminate them, to cast them overboard.—Z. '05:167.

"THE TONE OF VOICE"

"It is not so much what you say
As the manner in which you say it;
It is not so much the language you use,
As the tones in which you convey it.

"'Come here! I sharply said,
And baby cowered and wept;
'Come here,' I cooed, and he looked and smiled
And straight to my lap he crept.

"The words may be mild and fair,
And the tones may pierce like a dart;
The words may be soft as summer air,
And the tones may break the heart.

"For words but come from the mind,
And grow by study and art,
But the tones leap forth from the inner self
And reveal the state of the heart."—Z.'15:63.

Old Corn Gems

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A Question of Interest

Question. How can we reconcile with the love and justice of God the selection of the consecrated believers of the Gospel age **only** to be the bride of Christ, and not the overcomers of all ages?

Answer. To those who for many years have been under the impression that all of the human family who will be saved will be saved to the same plane it is natural that the "diversity" (See Eph. 3:10, 11—**Diaglott**) of God's creation should be difficult to receive. But this does not alter God's plan. The attitude of our hearts should be that of hearty acquiescence in what we see to be taught in God's Word: and we must ever remember the Apostle's words, "Who art thou that repliest against God?" "Hath not the potter power over the clay to make one vessel unto honor and another vessel unto less honor?" What if the fish should say that it is unjust for them to be confined to the waters? And what if the birds should object to their environment and wish to be as the fleet footed hare or the graceful deer? And what if the king of the forest should insist that it is unjust that he was not made man? What confusion there would be in creation! And is it more consistent for men to wish to be angels, when God never intended them to be such? And why, since God has invited only a special few to be heirs of the Kingdom, should it be taken as a slight to others of mankind not to be invited? God has not arranged to injure any of his creatures. He has blessings in store for them all, but he reserves the right to bestow upon each one such a blessing as his wisdom dictates. If we were to go on the street and from a dozen newsboys select three to whom to give a dollar each, would we be injuring the nine to whom we gave nothing? But if we should do an injury to any of them, we would be guilty of wrong doing. So God has a right to select the recipients of his favors. All that we have is of grace. We have merited nothing.—Z. '96: 260.

His Veiled Angels Guard Thee

"The angel of the Lord encampeth round about them that fear him, and delivereth them."—Psa. 34:7. "He shall give his angels charge over thee to keep thee in all thy ways."—Psa. 91:11. "Are they not all ministering spirits sent forth to minister unto them that shall be heirs of salvation?"—Heb. 1:14.

Often when thou'rt faint and weary in the struggle and the strife,
And thy heart nigh sinks within thee, 'neath the strain and stress of life:
When thou'rt tempted, tried and fearful, and thou can'st not see the way,
And each night looms black with shadows from thy sorrows in the day;
I would ask thee still to trust Him, He who sees all in the light,
For he guards thee by his angels, though they're veiled from thy sight,
Yea, he guards thee by his angels though they're veiled from thy sight.

Oh, be watchful, oh, be sober, for the Adversary tries,
To allure us to destruction by his subtly fashioned lies.
He would sift us, he would tempt us, he would claim us for his prey,
And his legions ever watch us as we tread the Narrow Way:
But we know of his devices, and we trust Jehovah's Might,
For he guards us by his angels, though they're veiled from our sight,
Yea, he guards us by his angels though they're veiled from our sight.

There is One who knows thy weakness, and thy failings, and thy tears,
Thy burdens and thy sorrows, and thy tremblings and thy fears,
And thy heart-cries always reach him, and are answered in his way,
Though thou can'st not see his workings as they shape thy path each day,
Sad disaster had o'erwhelmed thee had he not put forth his might,
Through his angels that surround thee, but are veiled from thy sight,
Guardian angels that surround thee, but are veiled from thy sight.

Ah, believe me, when the Day breaks, and we know as we are known,
In the sunlight of the glory that surrounds our Father's Throne,
He will tell us how he led us: we shall see the pathway clear,
The way we trod that led to God through failing, fault and fear,
And we'll see those guardian angels who were veiled from our sight.
We shall understand the workings of the Power put forth in might:
Yea, and with those guardian angels who were veiled from our sight,
We shall see our Saviour, and our God, in Heaven's Eternal Light.—Z. '05: 328.

A local Convention will be held at Duncan, B.C., on Saturday and Sunday, Oct. 1 and 2, 1921, under the auspices of the Duncan and Ladysmith Ecclesias. Bro. Arthur Thackray, Gen. Delivery, Duncan, B.C., Sec. of Convention.

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OLD CORN GEMS

NUMBER SIXTY-SIX

"And they did eat of the OLD CORN of the land on the morrow after the Passover . . . and the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the OLD CORN of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year." Joshua 5:11-12.

A SAFE RULE

"WHERE A BROTHER GIVES AN INTERPRETATION OF A SCRIPTURE WHICH DIFFERS FROM THAT GIVEN BY BROTHER RUSSELL, AND BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION SEEMS REASONABLE AND IN HARMONY WITH THE PLAN OF GOD, THEN WE BELIEVE IT A SAFE RULE TO FOLLOW BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION, FOR THE REASON THAT HE IS THE SERVANT OF THE CHURCH, SO CONSTITUTED BY THE LORD FOR THE LAODICEAN PERIOD; AND THEREFORE WE SHOULD EXPECT THE LORD TO TEACH US THROUGH HIM. WHERE THERE ARISES A DOUBT IN THE MIND AS TO WHICH INTERPRETATION IS CORRECT, THEN IT IS ALWAYS SAFER TO RESOLVE THAT DOUBT IN FAVOR OF BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION. WE BELIEVE SUCH TO BE IN HARMONY WITH THE LORD'S WILL." Z. '18:51.

Gethsemane—Watching and Praying

Matt. 26: 36-46.

"Not my will, but thine, be done."—Luke 22:42.

OUR LORD and his disciples leaving the upper room, where they had commemorated his death, went to the Mount of Olives, to an orchard there, known as Gethsemane,—the name signifying "oil-press place," probably because olives were there pressed and the oil extracted used both for light and for food. One of the Evangelists speaks of it as the "garden of Gethsemane," but the word garden, as used in olden times, corresponds more nearly with our word orchard: it was not a flower-garden. There is a small enclosure now on the side of Mount Olivet, about 150 feet square, which is reputed to be the place of our Lord's agonizing prayer. It contains eight very old and very gnarled olive trees, and whether the exact spot or not, it represents it sufficiently well.

Our Lord probably had two reasons for going forth as he did that night. First, realizing that he would be arrested by the traitor Judas and the band he would bring, our Lord probably did not wish to bring commotion or trouble upon the friend who had so kindly permitted him the use of the upper room. Secondly, he desired the still quiet of midnight, out upon the hillside where he could be alone with God, to pour out his soul in prayer and obtain the strength necessary for the ordeal at hand. In harmony with this last thought, we find that when our Lord reached the entrance to the orchard he left eight of the disciples there, as an outer guard, so to speak, or as pickets, to give notice; and took with him the same three disciples whom he had specially honored on other occasions, Peter, James and John: Peter, the bold and impulsive, James and John, the so-called "sons of thunder"—the three most courageous, most zealous, most earnest, of his disciples. These he wished to have nearest to himself in this time of anxiety. And yet, on this occasion, he desired to be still more alone in his prayer, for even these truest friends could not appreciate the situation: "of the people there were none with him." Hence he left these and went a stone's throw further, where he prostrated himself upon his knees, and with his face to the earth, as the various accounts show, and thus, alone, he communed with the Father.

The different accounts of our Lord's experience on this occasion, grouped together, show us that mental anguish seemed to come upon him here with a force of poignancy he had never before experienced; and that the load became increasingly heavy—"sorrowful even unto death," a sorrow which almost crushed out his very life, says Matthew. Mark says (14:33) that he was "sore amazed," as though the sorrow had come upon him unexpectedly, as though he were bewildered. Luke, who was a physician, says that he was "in an agony," a contest, a struggle, the language used in the Greek implying a struggle of increasing force and severity, so that "his sweat became as it were great drops of blood;" and this bloody sweat is not unknown to physicians today, although very rare. It marks an extreme tension of feeling—sorrow nigh unto death.*

Infidelity has suggested that this account of our Redeemer's sorrow, tears and prayers, attests his weakness. They argue that there have been many martyrs of various religions who have faced death with boldness, stoical firmness, sometimes with smiles, and that this account shows Jesus to have been cowardly, and inferior instead of superior to others. But there is a philosophy connected with the matter which they seem not to grasp. There is a dullness and numbness connected with fallen, degraded, coarse manhood that can regard pain and death with indifference,—which permits them either to undergo it themselves without great emotion, or to inflict it mercilessly upon others without compassion. We are glad that Jesus was not one of those cold, stoical icebergs, but that he was full of warm, loving, tender feelings and sensibilities; and that we can realize consequently that he is able to sympathize with the most tender, the most delicate, the most refined, the most sensitive, more than any other human being. He must have felt keenly the conditions under which he had placed himself, in laying down his life on our behalf; because the more perfect the organism the more sensitive and high-strung the feelings, the greater the capacity for joy and the greater the capacity for sorrow: and our Lord being absolutely perfect must have been immeasurably more susceptible to the influences of pain than others.

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* Prof. Tischendorf shows that this account of our Lord's bloody sweat is not found in the **Vatican MS.**, and that although it appeared in the original **Sinaitic MS.** it was crossed out by a later critic. The passage is therefore doubtful, or at least questionable.

Besides this he had a perfect life, unforfeited, and knew it, and realized that he was about to part with it; while others of the human family possess only a forfeited or condemned existence and realize that they must part with this sometime anyway. It would therefore be a very different matter for our Lord to lay down his life than for any of his followers to lay down their lives. Supposing 100 to represent perfect life, our Lord had the full one hundred units to lay down, while we, being more than ninety-nine-hundredths parts dead, through trespasses and sins and condemnation, could at most have only the one-hundredth part to lay down. A cold, stoical indifference to the loss of life, based upon knowledge that it could last but a short time longer anyway, would therefore be a very different thing from the clear knowledge which our Lord had, based upon his experiences with the Father "before the world was," and the realization that the life he was now about to lay down was not forfeited through sin, but was his own voluntary sacrifice.

There can be no doubt that this thought of the extinguishment of life was an important factor in our Lord's sorrow. The Apostle clearly intimates it in the words (Heb. 5:7), "Who in the days of his flesh . . . offered up prayers and supplications, with strong cryings and tears, unto him who was able to save him from [out of] death, and was heard in [respect to] that he feared"—extinction. Intent continually upon doing the Father's will, day by day had passed in self-sacrifice, until now, in a few hours, the whole would be complete: and the thought of this brought with it another thought, viz.: Had he done the Father's will perfectly? Could he claim, and would he receive the reward promised him, a resurrection from the dead?

Had he failed in any particular to come up to the exact standard of perfection his death would have meant extinction; and although all men fear extinction none could know the full depth and force of its meaning as could he who not only had the perfection of life, but had recollection of his previous glory with the Father before the world was. For him the very thought of an extinction would bring anguish, terror of soul. This thought seems not to have come to our Lord with the same force previously. It was this, therefore, that bore down upon him now so heavily as an astonishing sorrow unto death. He saw himself about to suffer according to the Law as an evil-doer, and the question naturally arose, was he entirely blameless, and would the heavenly judge thoroughly acquit him whom so many were disposed to condemn?

After praying awhile he went to the three disciples, in whom he had greatest confidence, and who, more than any others, were his tried and trusted companions, but he found them asleep. Luke explains that their sleep was the result of sorrow. The night and its lessons had been impressive; the memorial supper, which they did not fully understand, nevertheless left a weight of sorrow upon them, as the Master had intimated that it represented his death, and had further intimated that one of their number would betray him. The reaction from the sorrow brought a measure of stupor. Very gently our Lord upbraided them: "Could ye not watch with me one hour? Watch and pray lest ye enter into temptation." It is not merely that you need to watch on my account; you need to be in a watching attitude on your own account. An hour of severe trial is upon us all: watch and pray lest ye fall in this evil time.

Then our Lord went to pray again. We are told that his prayers were in the same words; that is to say, that the same sentiments were expressed; and again a third time similarly: the one matter was weighing upon his heart. Could he rely upon it now, that having sought to do the Father's will, that having finished his course, he had done it acceptably? Could he have full assurance of faith that God would save him out of death by a resurrection? In answer to his petition a heavenly messenger was sent to comfort him, to assure him, to strengthen him. We are not informed what message the angel brought, but we can see that it was a message of peace, and that he brought assurances that our Lord's course had the Father's approval, and that he would be brought again from the dead by a resurrection. These were quite sufficient to give our Lord all the strength and courage necessary for the ordeal before him; and from that moment onward we find him the coolest and calmest of the notable figures brought to our attention. When approached by Judas and his band he was the most calm and self-possessed of all; when before the chief priest, Caiaphas, it was the same way; when before Pilate the same; when crucified, the same; he had found peace in the message that he was approved of the Father, and that all the gracious promises of glory, honor and immortality were his, and now he could pass through any ordeal.

The Scriptures assure us that our Lord was tempted in all points like as we (his brethren) are, and we see in this his experience in Gethsemane an illustration of one of the most severe trials which come to the Lord's people. It would seem as though the Adversary at times attempted to discourage us by making us think that the trials and difficulties of the "narrow way" of sacrifice will be all unavailing anyhow, and that we might as well give up.

When such thoughts come to those who are earnestly and faithfully seeking to fulfil the conditions of their consecration vows they constitute one of the severest trials that could overtake them; if they have given up this world and its affections, hopes, aims, desires, exchanging all these for the heavenly, then anything which seems to becloud the heavenly hopes leaves them in a darkness more utter, more dense, than they could have known had they never seen and appreciated the glorious promises. And what course should we pursue at such a time? We should follow the example of our Lord, and seek the Father's face, anxious to know whether or not everything is all right with him; anxious for some assurances that while the world may hate us, and say all manner of evil against us falsely, we still have his approval; anxious for some fresh assurance that it will be well with us, that the Lord will grant us a part in the better resurrection to life eternal.

But while we draw this correspondency between our experiences and those of our Lord we should not forget that there is an immeasurable difference; that we are of the dying and ninety-nine-hundredths parts dead already, and that therefore we cannot so fully appreciate the meaning of death nor the meaning of life eternal; and besides all this we have the example of our Lord, and the further assurance that our share in the First resurrection is not to be attained through perfection of our own, but through his perfection, provided we shall have attested to the Lord our full loyalty of heart, of intention, of will, however imperfect the results of our efforts to glorify him in our bodies and spirits.

The Evangelist records that our Lord prayed, "Father, if it be possible, let this cup pass from me." It may be that our Lord meant by this, If your infinite love and mercy see it possible in any manner to accomplish your purposes of salvation for mankind without it being necessary for me to die, then grant it to be so. But if this were the Lord's thought it would imply that he had not fully grasped the Father's plan of a restitution for mankind, made possible through a ransom price for Adam and his sin; for, seeing this, our Lord could not have supposed that anything short of the full ransom could secure the results. Quite possibly, however, the thought which bore heavily upon him was the realization now coming vividly to his mind that if apprehended as a blasphemer it would be the policy of his enemies not to destroy him secretly, but to deliver him over to the Romans; and he could realize the influence and power they would exert to secure the performance of their wishes, and he knew that the Roman method of execution was that of crucifixion, and he knew also that the Scriptures explicitly said, "Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree."

Here, then, seems to have been the centre of his thought: I shall be esteemed of all my countrymen as forsaken of God, and as accursed of him; I shall die as a blasphemer, as a malefactor; whereas my every sentiment is, and has always been, fealty, loyalty to the Father. This, we believe, was the special feature of our Lord's anxiety, called the "cup" of sorrow, which he wished, if possible, might be removed. We believe that he knew his death to be necessary, unavoidable, as he had many times informed his disciples; but that it was this ignominious form of death, "even the death of the cross," that staggered him; for it not only bespoke shame and misrepresentation before the people, and those whom he loved and to whom he sought to do good, but it carried with it also the thought that he was accursed of God; and if accursed of God he could have no hope for a realization of the glorious promise of a resurrection. But when assured through the angel that he would not be actually accursed of God, even though he would for a time take the place of the accursed Adam and be "made a curse for us," his race, then even the cross and its shame could be endured with fortitude.

Watch and Pray Lest Ye Enter Into Temptation

In the case of our Lord and the apostles we see illustrated the value of watchfulness and prayer in the dark hour of trouble. Our Lord followed the direction he gave to the disciples: he watched, he prayed, he got a blessing, he was strengthened, and came off victor. They did not watch and did not pray, failing to realize the necessities of the occasion, and as a result we find them scattered, bewildered;—and one of them, the very strongest of them all, who boastingly had said a little while before, "Though all men forsake thee yet will not I," was so overpowered by his surroundings, and so weak through lack of the very strength he should have obtained through watching and prayer, that he denied the Lord with profanity.

Whenever we find the Lord's people attempting to live a life of holiness and consecration, yet ignoring the injunction of our Lord to watch and pray, we know that they are unwise; and that however much they may be virgins, pure ones, they are foolish: they cannot hope to gain the victory over self and sin and the Adversary, single-handed, alone. If the Master himself needed strengthening, surely we also need it; and if he received it in response to supplications with strong cryings and tears, it is an intimation to us of the way in which God is pleased to bestow the full assurance of faith which is able to strengthen us as good soldiers to endure any and everything in his name and service. Those who seek the Lord earnestly and in prayer are as sure to receive a blessing as was the Lord Jesus himself; and although there will not come to them the same kind of heavenly messenger to comfort and encourage them, nevertheless a heavenly messenger of another kind will surely be sent. It may be in the person of a fellow-disciple, able to enter into and sympathize with us in our trials and difficulties, as none of the apostles could sympathize with our Lord or assist him. Or it may be that the messenger sent will be one of the apostles themselves through the many gracious words of inspiration which God has communicated to us through them in his Word. But however the strength may come, it must be the assurance, not of men nor of angels, but of God, that we are pleasing and acceptable to him,—and that we may claim and expect the exceeding great and precious things which he has in reservation for them that love him.

So to speak, we are now in the hour of trial which cometh upon the whole world to try them. The present is represented in the Scriptures to be "the hour of temptation" or testing at the close of this age. It is the Gethsemane hour, in this sense of the word, to all who are the Lord's true people, fully consecrated to him. It is the hour, therefore, in which we, like our Lord, should be seeking the Father's face to receive the full assurance that we are his, and that he is ours; and that we may rely confidently on his strength to carry us through this time. It is the time in which we are to make sure, as we sometimes sing:

> "O let no earthborn cloud arise
> To hide thee from thy servant's eyes."

It is a time in which those who neglect the Master's words, "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation," will be sure to enter into temptation, and be tolerably sure to fall therein. And the fall will be severe,—and even though, like Peter, they should afterward be recovered out of it, it will be with weeping.

Some make the mistake of praying without watching; others make the mistake of watching without praying; but the safe and only proper method is that which our Lord directed, to combine the two. We are to watch, and to be on our guard against the encroachments of the world, the flesh and the devil. We are to watch for all the encouragements of the Lord's Word, the evidence of their fulfilment, the signs that betoken his presence and the great changes of dispensation just at hand. We are to watch for everything that will strengthen us in faith and hope and loyalty and love; and while watching we are to pray without ceasing. We are to pray together as the Lord's people; we are to pray in our homes, as families; we are to pray in secret, in private. We are to have the spirit of prayer in all that we say and do: that is to say, our hearts should be going out continually to the Lord for guidance in all of life's affairs, that we may do with our might what our hands find to do, in a manner that will be acceptable to him, and that we may be shielded by him from temptation that would otherwise be beyond our endurance, and that we may be ultimately delivered from the Evil One and have a place in our Lord's Kingdom. Brethren and sisters, let us more and more remember and put into practice these words of our Lord, "Watch and pray, lest ye enter into temptation."—Z. '01 : 77-80.

Patience as an Element of Character

"Because thou hast kept the word of my patience I will also keep thee from the hour of temptation which shall come upon all the world to try them that dwell upon the earth."—Rev. 3:10.

WE WILL not here discuss this verse from the standpoint of its application to the Philadelphia epoch of the Church's history, but will content ourselves with examining the principles implied in its statement, believing, as we do, that the Lord's dealings with his Church throughout this Gospel age follow the same lines, are in harmony with the same principles. Whatever condition, therefore, would be acceptable and pleasing to the Lord as respected the Philadelphia epoch of the Church's history would be acceptable and pleasing to him in respect to ourselves and all others of his people during this age.

Special stress, we see, is laid upon patience—"the word of my patience," or, the patience which my word inculcates. Examining the word critically we find that two quite distinct words in the Greek are translated by our English word patience in the New Testament; the one is **makrothunia** (Heb. 6:12; James 5:10; Acts 26:3): this is the word which in a general way corresponds to the common thought of patience, as we speak of it connected with everyday affairs of our lives; it means merely long-suffering, and, indeed, **makrothunia** is generally so translated throughout the New Testament. (Rom. 2:4; 9:22; Eph. 4:2; Col. 1:11; 3:12; 1 Tim. 1:16; 2 Pet. 3:15, etc.) But this is not the word used in our text, nor the word generally translated **patience** throughout the New Testament, **viz., hupomonee.**

This word, **hupomonee,** has a much deeper and fuller significance than attaches to our English word patience. It signifies rather **constancy,**—the thought being an endurance of evil in a cheerful, willing, patient manner. It represents, therefore, an **element of character,** and not merely a temporary condition or restraint of feeling or action. For instance, a worldly man might have a great deal of patience in connection with the prosecution of his business;—he might be very attentive to his customers, very obliging, very painstaking, and show no dissatisfaction in connection with the inconsiderateness of his customers; and **"patience,"** in its ordinary sense, might be ascribed to his conduct. But the word in our text rendered **patience** signifies such a development of heart and character as manifests itself in an endurance of wrong or affliction with contentment, without rebellion of will, with full acquiescence in the divine wisdom and love, which, while permitting present evils, has promised to overthrow them in God's due time. We believe it will be profitable for us to examine carefully this element of Christian character, of which our Lord speaks in such high commendation, that recognizing it clearly, we, as his followers, may attain to it more completely, and thus have his more abundant approval.

Since our text mentions this patient endurance as being the Lord's "word" or teaching, let us glance backward to the Gospel narrative, and note the Lord's use of the word in his teaching. Twice it is recorded as a part of his utterance. In Luke 8:15, in the parable of the sower, we read: "That [sown] on the good ground are they which in an honest and good heart, having heard the word, keep it, and bring forth fruit with **patience** [with cheerful endurance, constancy]." The thought here is that in order to be of the fruit-bearing class which the Lord will approve and accept to his Kingdom, it is necessary to do more than to receive the word of his testimony, even though we receive it with joy—for that class in the parable is represented by the stony ground, which at first gave evidence of great fruitfulness and vigor, but which, when the sun of persecution arose, withered, because of lack of depth of soil. That stony, shallow soil represents, the Lord explains, a class of hearers who rejoice greatly in the truth, but do not **endure,** such as cannot withstand persecution or opposition, but wither under it, become discouraged. Such cannot be of the Kingdom class, all of whom must be overcomers.

In this parable our Lord shows us that **patient endurance, constancy,** is the final test, following after the readiness of preparation to receive the seed; following after the seed has been received and has sprouted; following after love and hope and joy and faith have caused it to spring forth and to give fruitage. **Patient endurance,** then, is necessary, in order that the grain may be developed and thoroughly ripened, and made fit for the garner. Ah! how important **patient endurance** seems to be, in the light of this our Lord's word—cheerful endurance; for we cannot suppose that he who judges the thoughts and intents of the heart would be pleased with his children, even if he saw them **enduring** much for his sake, if they endured in an impatient or dissatisfied or unhappy frame of mind. They would not, in that event, be copies of God's dear Son, our Lord, whose sentiment is expressed in the words, "I **delight** to do thy will, O God!" All of the Royal Priesthood are sacrificers, as was the Chief Priest, our Redeemer and example, who offered up himself: we, as the under priests, have also presented our bodies living sacrifices, and are to lay down our lives for the brethren—in the service of the truth. And God, who accepts these sacrifices through the merit of Christ, informs us that he appreciates or loves the **cheerful** giver, those who perform their sacrifices of a willing heart, cheerfully. And this thought, be it noted, is in the Greek word we are considering. It is cheerful endurance, patient endurance, that is commended.

The other instance in which our Lord used the word during his ministry is recorded in Luke 21:19. He had just been telling his followers what they must expect as the result of being his disciples during the present time, when sin abounds, and when Satan is the prince of this world—they must expect tribulation, opposition from various quarters; but he assures them that they would nevertheless be fully and completely under divine care and protection, even though the persecutions would be permitted to reach and to affect them. Then follow the words, "In your patience [**patient endurance, cheerful constancy**] possess ye your souls."

Our faith and trust in the Lord and his gracious promises for the future life are to be so strong that they will more than counter-balance the oppositions of the world, of false brethren, and of Satan's blinded servants;—so much so that these persecutions will be recognized and rejoiced in as the agencies of divine providence in chiseling, shaping and polishing us as the living stones for the glorious Temple which God is constructing. And viewing our trials from this standpoint we can indeed possess our souls, our lives, and enjoy them, even amidst tribulation, with **cheerful endurance,** constancy. Yea, we may realize that the soul, the real being, to which God has given the exceeding great and precious promises of the future, cannot be injured by the persecutions of the flesh, nor by anything that men can do to us, so long as we are faithful to the Lord, accepting the persecutions with cheerful constancy, as the ministrations permitted of his providence for our ultimate good.

The Necessity for Patient Endurance

Here the question properly arises, Why is this so? In what sense is such endurance necessary? We answer that it is one of the conditions which God has attached to the call to joint-heirship in the Kingdom, and the wisdom of this is manifest when we consider the work to which we are called—the work of blessing all the families of the earth, as God's Millennial Kingdom, under and in joint-heirship with our Lord. That will be a great work, and it is eminently proper that the Lord should demand that those whom he would account worthy of it shall not only appreciate his goodness and his character, and prefer these to sin and iniquity, but that they should demonstrate their thorough loyalty to these principles to the extent of a joyful willingness to suffer on behalf of right, to endure patiently. A transitory endurance of one or two or three brief trials would not prove the person to have established character for righteousness; but a patient, cheerful endurance even unto death, would prove and demonstrate such a character.

We might illustrate this with the diamond. Suppose that we were able to make diamonds out of some plastic material, so that they would have the full diamond measure of brilliancy; and suppose that they became hard, but not so intensely hard as the diamond, would they have the value of the diamond? By no means. And so with the Christian; if we should suppose him possessed of every grace of character that could possibly belong to the sons of God except this one of firmness, of endurance, he would not be fit to be numbered amongst the Lord's jewels. Hence the Lord's demand is that the quality of firmness, cheerful endurance of whatever his providence may permit, shall be a characteristic of all those who will be fit for the Kingdom.

This importance of endurance in the Christian character is fully borne out by the Apostle Paul's use of the word; for on more than one occasion he ranks it as above and beyond Love, which we have seen is the "mark" of character for which we are to run,—the mark of the prize. For instance, in writing to Titus (2:2), enumerating the characteristics of the advanced Christian, the Apostle uses the following order: "Vigilant, grave, temperate, sound in faith, in charity [love], in **patience** [patient, cheerful endurance]." Though we have all the other qualities, this final test of patient, cheerful endurance must be passed before we could be accepted of the Lord as members of the "very elect."

Again, in writing to Timothy (2 Tim. 3:10) respecting himself, the Apostle again puts this quality of **patient endurance** in the place beyond Love saying, "Thou hast fully known my doctrine, manner of life, purpose, faith, long-suffering, love, **patient endurance.**"

It may be asked, How can this quality rank higher than love, if love is the fulfilling of the Law, and the mark of the prize of our high calling? We reply, that patient endurance does not merely come in at the close of our race, but is requisite all the way along the race course. We need this cheerful endurance of the earliest trials in the Christian way, and as we speed along in our race for the mark the spirit of cheerful endurance should be growing stronger and stronger at every step of the journey. It is with us at the first quarter mark, and at the second quarter mark, and at the third quarter mark, and still with us at the fourth quarter mark, the mark of the prize, perfect love. And when we have reached this mark of the race in which we love not only our friends, but our enemies, it is required of us that we shall stand up to the mark faithfully, cheerfully, **patiently enduring** the tests which the Lord will even then see proper to let come upon us. Hence it is that the Apostle exhorts us, "Having done all, **stand"—endure.** Having reached the "mark," "Let **patient endurance** have her perfect work," or "perfect her work." Let **patient endurance** demonstrate, not only that you have the character, the qualifications of love, demanded in the race for the prize, but also that you have it as an element of character, deep-rooted, immutable, so that you can endure oppositions cheerfully.

Ah yes! we can see now a reason for the Lord's arrangement that we should have our trial as the Master had his, under an evil environment—that we might not only have the qualities of character, but have them rooted, grounded, established, and that all this should be demonstrated and proven by our **cheerful endurance** of whatever divine providence shall see best to permit to befall us.

Inspired Applications of Patient-Endurance

Everything that will enable us to see the importance of this quality of patient, cheerful **endurance** will be helpful to us. Therefore let us notice some other instances in which this word is used in the New Testament. The Apostle Paul says, "But ye have need of **patience** [cheerful endurance, constancy] that **after** ye have done the will of God [reached the mark] ye might receive the promise." (Heb. 10:36.) Here, again, we see that it is not merely to do the will of God that is the test, but, that after having attained to that point, that mark of character in our hearts, in our wills (if only partially in the flesh) we should, by **patient endurance,** establish God's righteous will as the law of our hearts, the rule of life under all circumstances and conditions. Then, and not till then, will we be in the heart condition of fitness for the Kingdom. The Apostle James (1.3) says: "The trying of your faith worketh patience [**patient endurance**];" that is to say, if our faith stands the trial it will work this character of patient endurance: of course, on the other hand, if we do not attain to patient endurance, it will mean that our faith has not stood the test satisfactorily, that we are not fit for the Kingdom.

Thus we see clearly that a great mistake has been made amongst Christian people in general in supposing that religion is merely **a thing** that is to be gotten as an answer to prayer, or by going to a mourners' bench, or standing up for prayer, or in response to some human or divine appeal—as one would get a dollar and put it into his pocket. On the contrary, repentance of sin and acceptance of Christ, in faith unto justification, is only the beginning and not the end of the Christian way. The next step is consecration, and this also, is far from the end; it is merely starting in the school of Christ, having our names enrolled as those who desire to be pupils, and to be taught of God to cultivate the fruits and graces of the spirit. All these things are necessary, but much more is necessary; we must go on and on, not only to the attainment of the faith and the love, but also to the demonstration of character as expressed in his word, **patient endurance.**

The Apostle Paul exhorts, "Let us run with patience [cheerful constancy, patient endurance] the race set before us in the Gospel." (Heb. 12:1.) As already observed, the race must be run with this constancy if we would reach the "mark," and after reaching the mark the position can only be maintained by the grace of constancy, patient endurance, that having done all, we may stand.

The Hour of Temptation About to Come Upon the Whole World

We are not to understand our Lord's words to mean that he kept those of his people designated as the Church at Philadelphia from all trials and temptations: quite to the contrary, we may be sure that trials and temptations have been the portion of the Lord's people throughout the entire age. As the Apostle Peter said to some in his day, "Think it not strange concerning the fiery trials which shall try you, as though some strange [new] thing happened unto you." (1 Pet. 4:12.) Trials must be the portion of all who would be "overcomers." How else could they overcome if they had no trials to overcome? The Church represented as belonging to the Philadelphia period had these common or general trials; but the Lord proposed to spare them from certain special trials that were about to come upon the whole world. We are not of the Philadelphia epoch, but of the Laodicean epoch, which goes into these trials, and to our understanding this "hour of temptation," which is to try all people of the world, is already here, we are already in it, and it forms part of the testing of our endurance.

But though our Lord does not preserve the Laodicean stage of his saints from going into the trouble, we may be sure that those who **keep the word of his patience** now will have his keeping power, as promised to the Laodicean saints: "I stand at the door and knock; whoever hears my voice and opens to me I will come in and sup with him and he with me." This is the special reward of those who are running (who have run) the race with **patient endurance,** in the Laodicean period: while it was not our privilege to escape the hour of temptation, it is our privilege to have a counter-balancing special blessing as a result of living in the time of our Lord's **parousia** (presence). We may have his fellowship, his instruction, his dispensing of spiritual food which is now "meat in due season," in a manner and to a degree which none of the faithful of past periods enjoyed these. But as we might expect, this greatest favor is correspondingly offset by the subtility and severity of the trials of this hour of temptation coming upon the whole world.

If ever **patient endurance** was necessary it is necessary now; if ever it was true, "In patience possess ye your souls," it is so now. Those running the race acceptably, and possessing this **patient endurance,** will be able "to stand in this evil day," and no others will be able to stand; for, as the Apostle says, the fiery trials of this day shall try every man's work of what sort it is.—1 Cor. 3:13.

The hour of temptation seems to bear specially upon and test this point of **patient endurance,** and throughout the civilized world we find this quality of **patient endurance** becoming more and more scarce. Whether we can compare conditions of to-day with those of fifty years ago, or forty, or thirty, or twenty, or ten years ago, according to our experience in the matter, we will see that willingness to endure at all is growing more and more scarce. Nobody wishes to endure anything—for righteousness' sake, for Christ's sake or for anybody else's sake, and if endurance even be necessary it is generally with very much of impatience, very much more of complaint, etc., than formerly. And this general tendency of the civilized world to non-endurance and impatience, necessarily has its bearing and influence upon all who are seeking to walk in the narrow way, going against the current of public sentiment and custom; the stronger that current the greater their difficulty, and only by divine grace can progress be made.

This necessary divine grace is granted to us through a knowledge of the divine plan, and is withheld from those who are not walking close to the Lord in the footsteps of Jesus. It is for this reason that we see a growing disposition toward impatience, non-endurance, amongst the professed followers of Christ. It is at the bottom of the mob violence which in Europe is kept down by military force, but which in this country is manifesting itself in repeated instances of lynching, etc., which proclaims with loud voice **impatience** as the growing sentiment. . . .

Indeed, we may expect the growth of this spirit in Christendom—the feeling that in the past they have been too patient, not sufficiently aggressive—the feeling that if they had taken matters into their own hands long ago the world might have been converted ere this. But those who have kept the Lord's word of **patient endurance,** and who have sought from him the needed wisdom from on high, that is first pure ,then peaceable, easy of entreatment, full of mercy and good works, and **patient endurance,** have learned that he has a due time in which his purposes shall all be accomplished; and learning this has assisted them in cultivating **patient endurance** as their Lord endured the opposition of evil, its malignity, its spite, its falsehoods, its persecution—enduring all this cheerfully, patiently, as unto the Lord—realizing that it is the programme which the Lord has not only permitted, but permitted for wise purposes in connection with the call and preparation of the "little flock" who shall be joint-heirs with Christ, their Lord, in the Kingdom. . . .

The hour of trial is not coming alike upon all; for all Christendom is not upon the same plane of development, mental, moral, physical, spiritual. The trial, as it is coming upon Christendom in general, is pictured by the Apostle in his letter to Timothy (2 Tim. 3:1-5). He here delineates certain characteristics of this hour of temptation, otherwise called the great "time of trouble" coming upon the world; and from his prophetic delineation we see that selfishness will be at the bottom of the matter, and that **impatience** will be its weapon. The Apostle says, "This know also, that in the last days perilous times shall come; men shall be lovers of their own selves; covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, truce-breakers, false accusers [enticers to strife], incontinent [not under restraint, impetuous], fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors [cannot be trusted, would sell out their best friends for selfish considerations], heady, high-minded, lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God, **having a form of godliness,** but denying the power thereof."

In his letter to the Thessalonians (2 Thess. 2:-9-12) the Apostle gives some further intimations respecting the peculiar trials of this hour of temptations, which has come upon the whole world, but which has not yet reached its intensity, but is already working, and sifting, separating,—because the judgment begins with the house of God. He says, speaking of Satan as the prime mover in the evils of this present time, and especially active in this hour of temptation with which this age shall close, that his effort will be "with all power and signs and lying wonders, and with all deceiveableness of unrighteousness in them that perish." Then he explains to us the reason why it will be so, saying, "Because they received not **the truth** in the **love of it,** that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion that they should believe a lie, that they all might be condemned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."

God's promise is the foundation upon which all that we hope for, either of character or coming glory, is built. **Let us prize this truth so that we will not compromise it in any sense or in any degree**; let us not only hold the truth in the letter but in the spirit;—in the love of it, because it is true, as well as because it is beautiful and grand. Holding it thus we will be careful that no one shall twist it for us or pervert it, and equally careful that we do not handle the word of God deceitfully ourselves, to the blinding of our own eyes of understanding, and thus to our own hindrance. And let us ever remember the importance of **patient endurance,** that we may not only cultivate the Christian graces, and practise them, but that we may take joyfully the trials, persecutions or difficulties which our Lord may see proper to permit to come upon us for our testing and for the development of this character which he explains to us is of paramount importance, and without which perfect love could neither be attained nor maintained. . . .

Nor can we pray the Lord not to permit these trials of faith and patient endurance: for we recognize that the "very elect" must be a tried people, because of the very object of their election,—that they may be joint-heirs with Christ in the long-promised Kingdom that is to judge and bless the world during the Millennium. As the Apostle says, these "fiery trials **must** try you." It is a matter of **must,** of necessity, as respects all who would be graduated from the present school of Christ to a share in his glorious Kingdom,—that they must pass the examination.

Ah, if we could but keep this thought before us **continually,** how it would nerve us to will and to do the Lord's good pleasure—enduring faithfully and cheerfully whatever our loving Master sees best to permit, **knowing** that thus he is working out for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory. From this standpoint

"How light our trials then will seem!
How short our pilgrim way!
The life of earth a fitful dream,
Dispelled by dawning day!

"Then peace, my heart! and hush my tongue!
Be calm, my troubled breast!
Each passing hour prepares thee more
For everlasting rest."

Let us each, dear brethren, be very solicitous for ourselves and for each other: and counting the prize set before us in the gospel as superior to all else, as the Apostle says, "Let us fear, lest a promise being left us of entering into his rest, any of you should seem to come short of it." Let us so love all the Lord's children that their welfare will be our chief concern, and this will mean our own spiritual health. Yet we must not permit our love even for the brethren to hinder our confidence in the Lord's love and wisdom in respect to his terms in the choice of his Bride;—even though the siftings should take from us some, whose fellowship we dearly cherish.

"Why should an anxious load
Press down thy weary mind?
Haste to thy Heavenly Father's throne
And sweet refreshment find."

—Z. '01:115-120.

Provoking One Another

"Let us consider one another, to provoke unto love and to good works: not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together, as the manner of some is, but exhorting one another: and so much the more as ye see the day drawing on."—Heb. 10:24, 25.

THE word "provoke" signifies to arouse or incite, or stimulate to activity. It is generally used in an evil sense, but is applicable, as in our text, to describe an incitement to good works, good thoughts, etc. The tendency of fallen human nature is toward things that are mean, selfish, groveling, and the natural bent is to incite or provoke or encourage similarly mean and unworthy thoughts, actions and words in others, and it has become a proverb that "Evil communications corrupt good manners." Everyone of experience knows this general tendency of evil to beget evil, and to corrupt and to pollute what is nobler and purer than itself; hence we have the Scriptural pronouncement, "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful." Those who neglect this counsel need not be surprised if they are continually falling into temptation, and if the influence upon their own lives results in a measure at least of ungodliness and sin, and disfellowship from those things which are noble and true and pure.

But the "New Creature in Christ Jesus" is one in whom the transforming influences of the Lord's Spirit have already begun—one who has a new heart, a new will, a new disposition. With such, "old things have passed away, and all things have become new": they have been begotten again—**i.e., re**begotten—to new hopes, new wishes, new ideas of propriety. Instead of the earthly wisdom and way, with its "bitter envying and strife," which "descendeth not from above, but is earthly, sensual, devilish," they have now the wisdom that is from above, and a heart (a disposition) to appreciate and pursue its counsels, which are, first purity, then peaceableness, gentleness, meekness, mercy, good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy. And the disposition of this class, in proportion to their attainment of this heavenly wisdom and new nature, will be to "provoke" or incite or encourage one another, and all with whom they come in contact, to similar goodness of thought and word and act, in harmony with the heavenly wisdom which is guiding their own course.

This is laid down in the Scriptures as an unvarying rule: "A bitter fountain cannot send forth sweet water, and a good fountain cannot send forth brackish water." A thistle cannot bear grapes, and a grapevine cannot bear thistles. It is the Master himself who says, "By their fruits ye shall know them." If, therefore, we desire to prove ourselves, and to judge respecting our progress in mortifying (putting to death) the old nature, and our growth in the new nature, we will judge ourselves by this standard; answering to ourselves the question,—Is my own spirit (disposition) one which delights in sin in its various forms (not necessarily in its grosser forms of murder, theft, etc., but in its more refined forms, falsity, envy, strife, vainglory, slander, evil-speaking, evil surmises, etc.), or is my delight increasingly in righteousness, truth, goodness, gentleness, meekness, patience, love? If the former, we are yet, either wholly or partially, in the gall of bitterness and in the bondage of iniquity, and have need to go at once to the Great Physician, and to submit ourselves to his radical treatment—the cutting off of sin, the mortifying of such fleshly desires, etc. If the latter be our condition of heart we have cause for rejoicing, yet no cause for pride or boastfulness; for we can say no more than that we only have done our duty, having merely learned, and that imperfectly, the lessons set before us by our great Teacher.

The Apostle is addressing the Church, the consecrated New Creatures in Christ Jesus. This is shown in the text, for he classes himself with these, using the word "us"; it is also shown by the context. He calls the attention of the consecrated to the influence which goes out from each to each, and the consequent importance that the influence shall always be stimulating, or provocative of that which is good. No doubt the Apostle found in his day, as we find now, that many who are consecrated at heart fail to see clearly how this consecration should associate itself with and mark itself upon our every act and word. Perhaps he saw then, as we see now, that the holy influence of truth, gathered at a meeting of the Lord's people, through their communion of heart with each other and with the Lord, is not infrequently spoiled, dissipated entirely, by inconsiderate or unkind remarks of some of the company, upon dismissal.

Who, of experience, does not know how great a matter a little fire may kindle; how much evil may be started by the fire of the tongue? how many unkind thoughts, evil suspicions, surmises, how much envy, malice, hatred and strife may be started by a mere insinuation? Since the Lord declares, "Out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh," it follows that the hearts and lips, from which emanate these evil influences, are not controlled by the wisdom that cometh from above, though they be in some measure consecrated to the Lord.

It is a great mistake, also, to suppose that because the evil thing is said in a kind and gentle manner, therefore it is a good thing, and evidence of a pure heart, that is full of love: quite to the contrary, we know that the great Adversary is continually presenting himself in garments of light, that he may exercise the greater influence for evil upon those who have made a covenant with the Lord. So, likewise, those who implant evil thoughts, surmises, etc., in a smooth and polished manner, and perhaps with a tear, are the most dangerous foes of peace and fellowship, and often accomplish the greater harm; because they succeed in planting roots of bitterness and thoughts of evil in hearts which would utterly resent the same evil thoughts and evil surmisings if presented in a coarse, offensive and obtrusive manner.

We are not to be reckless of each other's interests. In our contact with each other, whether a personal contact or a contact by mail or a contact through the columns of this journal, we are to "consider one another." We are to consider what would be helps, and what would be hindrances, what would be encouragements and what would be stumbling-blocks; and we are to do all in our power to assist one another to run with patience the race for the heavenly prize. If we are truly consecrated to the Lord, we can do nothing "against the truth, but [every effort must be] for the truth." (2 Cor. 13:8.) What a burning and shining light every Christian would be if his every act were considered and shaped for the benefit of those with whom he comes in contact! What a blessing it would be in the home! What a blessing it would be in the Church! This brotherly consideration is what the Apostle is urging upon us: "Consider one another to provoke [incite, encourage] to love and to good works." Avoid every word and every act, so far as possible, that might incite to hatred, envy, strife, bitterness (and bad works, corresponding to these feelings), all of which are "of the flesh and of the devil."

The Apostle links this advice with the exhortation to forget not the assembling of ourselves together, as the Lord's people. None of us is so strong in the new nature that he can disregard the fellowship of kindred minds. But even if we did feel sufficiently strong for ourselves, the spirit of love in us should so control that we would delight to meet with "the brethren" for their sakes, if we ourselves received no benefit therefrom. But we are more or less like coals of fire, which, if separated, will tend to cool rapidly, but which, if brought together, will tend to increase in fervency the entire mass. Our Lord has encouraged his people to seek each other's fellowship for companionship in the study of his Word, and in prayer, pronouncing special blessings upon the meeting of his people together, even if so few as only two or three.

It is true that sometimes isolated ones, who have no fellowship in the Present Truth (except through this journal) are often amongst the most staunch and devoted and self-sacrificing of the Lord's people: but we should not from this infer that the blessing comes from their isolation, but rather, since their separation is unavoidable on their part, we may reasonably suppose that our Lord makes up to them, in his own presence and blessing, that which they lack of fellowship with other members of the Body. But if one had opportunity for assembling with others for worship of the Lord and the study of his Word, and neglected to avail himself of his privilege, we need not expect that for his benefit the Lord would work special miracles of grace. The Lord's miracles may be expected only in times of emergency, to make up for natural deficiency.

Besides, we are to remember that through this journal and the mail the Lord has established a channel of communication amongst his people so that no one needs to be without such fellowship and spiritual intercourse. . . .

The Apostle intimates that, as "the Day" draws near there will be the more need for the observance of this instruction respecting the fellowship and communion of the Lord's people with each other. And experience proves this: the great Millennial Day which has already begun, chronologically, has brought with it new activities in mind and body, a greater pressure of business and rush to keep abreast of the times, and a correspondingly greater danger to the Lord's people of being choked with the cares of this life, or with the deceitfulness of riches, or the seeking of riches. We need a counteracting influence to off-set this increasing influence of the world and its affairs upon us; and this counteracting influence is to be sought and to be found by the Lord's people among themselves,—communing one with the other and with the Lord, and exhorting and encouraging one another to steadfastness along the lines of instruction laid down in his Word.

And not only so, but we find that the beginning of this great Millennial Day is a "day of trouble." We find that the latter part of this day of trouble is to be upon the world, and that the Lord promised his Church that, if faithful, they shall be "accounted worthy to escape all those things coming upon the world." But we have found also that the forepart of this day of trouble, which is the time of preparation for the world's trouble, will be a special time of peculiar trouble and trial, testing and sifting upon the Church: for—The judgments of this day "must begin with the house of God." We see this sifting and shaking in progress all about us in the nominal Church, and still more intensely among those who occupy a still higher position and enlightenment through the knowledge of the Present Truth. "The great day of his wrath [judgment, testing, sifting] first of the Church and afterward the nations] is come, and who shall be able to stand?" We hear the Apostle's exhortation, as he looked down prophetically to our day, saying, "Wherefore, take unto you the whole armor of God, **that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day,** and having done all, to stand. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in exalted positions."—Eph. 6:13, 14.

It is "as we see the day **drawing on**" that we are to be the more diligent in assembling ourselves with those of like precious faith; the more earnest in exhorting and provoking to love and to good works, and thus to assist one another in putting (keeping) on "the whole armor of God"—the graces of character, meekness, patience, gentleness, brotherly kindness, faith, truth, hope—that with these as the divine panoply or armor, protecting us from the assaults of the Adversary in this day, we may be able to stand. The clear intimation is that, unless we have on this armor, we will be unable to stand. And this armor includes more than mere head-knowledge, represented by the helmet; it includes, be it noted, the entire breastplate of righteousness, purity of heart, and it includes the shield of faith, and the sword of the Spirit, and the sandals of consecration.

In the succeeding verse the Apostle mentions the possibility of wilful sin among the Lord's people, and what it would imply—the Second Death (the sorer punishment than the first death, in that it would be without hope)—"everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and the glory of his power."

While wilful sin has always been the same, it would not be unreasonable to infer from the Apostle's words that the temptations and dangers of "this evil day" in which we live will specially tend to trial along this line. Let it be clearly noticed that the Apostle is not speaking of sins of ignorance nor of accidental missteps by being overtaken in a fault, whose sin is not unto death, and from which the transgressors may be restored in a spirit of meekness. He is referring directly to full, complete sin—the sin upon which the full penalty is justly and properly to be recompensed.

At first thought, many may be inclined to say, "Well, I am in no danger of that sin, for I am sure that I would not commit sin wilfully, intentionally, designedly." But let us notice, dear friends, that there is a way in which sin may come upon us without being at the time a wilful sin, but which later might become wilful sin: for instance, any transgression committed, either in total ignorance or with only a partial acquiescence of our wills, might become a full, wilful, deliberate sin afterward, if we afterward came to a clear knowledge of the truth respecting the subject, and failed to repent of it to the Lord, and to undo so far as was in our power the wrong toward our fellow-creatures. To consent to a sin clearly and fully understood, simply because at the time of its committal we were in ignorance, and to refuse to make amends for it, and thus to endorse the sin intelligently, would appear to make it a **will-full** sin.

With this view of the matter, the children of God cannot afford to sanction in their minds even the slightest injustice or untruth towards each other, or towards anyone. The essence of this thought is found in our Lord's command: "If thou comest to the altar [if we have anything to offer to the Lord, either of service or of worship or of thanks], and there rememberest that thy brother hath aught against thee [that someone has been wronged by you, either in word or thought or act] leave there thy gift before the altar [do not think that it will be acceptable to God while in your heart or outwardly you are practising injustice toward others]; first go and be reconciled to thy brother [make amends to him, apologies, explanations in full, of whatever wrong you have done him] and then come and offer thy gift [assured that in such an attitude of heart the Lord Almighty will be pleased to accept your gift]."

In describing those who sin wilfully, the Apostle uses very strong, figurative language, declaring that, inasmuch as they are in heart-sympathy with sin, and not in opposition to it, they are the opponents of the Son of God, who was so out of sympathy with sin in its every form that he laid down his life to redeem us from its power and curse. The Apostle declares that such wilful sinners may be esteemed as the enemies of Christ, who really trample him and his goodness and love under their feet, figuratively, disdaining his mercy and favor as well as his instruction in righteousness. He says that, inasmuch as they were once sanctified, as a result of their faith in the precious blood and its cleansing from sin, their turning now into harmony with sin would imply that they now disesteem the precious blood of Christ which redeemed us to God, counting it a non-sacred thing—common—and do despite to the spirit of divine favor which had held out to them freedom from the yoke of sin, and ultimately release from its penalty, death; and the attainment, as the Lord's people, of the crown of life eternal.

While holding up before the Church the dangers of sin, and the danger of falling away from steadfastness for Christ and to the principles of his righteousness, the Apostle encourages us to continue our fight against sin and its influence in ourselves and in others, "perfecting holiness in the reverence of the Lord." Accordingly he calls our minds back to our first love and first zeal—"the former days, in which, after ye were illuminated, ye endured a great fight of affliction; partly whilst ye were made a gazingstock both by reproaches and affliction, and partly whilst ye became companions of them that were so used." He would thus encourage the Lord's people to continue the good fight—to continue to wage warfare against the world, the flesh and the devil, and the spirit of these, especially each within himself, in the battlefield of his own soul. And he urges that faith in the Lord and the rewards which he shall grant by and by, when he shall be glorified in his saints, is very necessary to our endurance of hardness as good soldiers in the fight against evil, both within and without, saying, "Cast not away, therefore, your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward"—"forsake not the assembling of yourselves together, as the manner of some is, but exhort one another: and so much the more as ye see the day approaching."

And this reminds us of the words of the Lord, through the prophet Malachi (3:15-17): In the time when the proud are happy, and they that work wickedness are established in power and influence, and they that tempt God seem to be blessed—"then they that feared the Lord spake often one to another [sympathizing with and encouraging one another, so much the more]: and the Lord hearkened and heard it; and a book of remembrance was written before him of them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon his name; and they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels; and I will spare them, as a man spareth his own son that serveth him." But while all should seek to provoke to love and to good works and to happy looks, we well know that the majority do the reverse. Hence, we suggest that the Lord's peculiar people may be so controlled by the Word and its spirit that they will be incited to good works, good deeds and good looks even by the most unfavorable conditions. Consider Stephen, confronted by those who afterward took his life: not only had he courage to preach to them, but his heart was so provoked to love and good works that his face shone with an angelic beauty. (Acts 6:15.) And the same grace abounding enabled him to pray for his murderers. (Acts 7:60.) Nothing could provoke such a spirit-filled saint to evil. Let us follow the example of such close followers of our Lord's footsteps.—Z. '07:312-315.

The Importance of Example

"Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity [love], in spirit, in faith, in purity."—1 Timothy 4:12.

WE REMEMBER that Timothy was an Elder in the Church, though young in years. Therefore, it was appropriate that St. Paul should impress upon his mind that he should be an example of the believers, an example to all the Church; and such instruction is implied in other parts of the Epistle. But note that the Apostle, in our text, does not say: Be thou an example **to** the believers, but, "Be thou an example **of** the believers." How different!

Being an example **of** believers means that one should show forth not only to his fellow-workers in the Gospel, but especially to the world, what believers stand for—what they believe, what they teach, how they live. . . .

St. Paul further urges: "Be thou an example in conversation." This word **conversation** does not refer merely to language, as it is now used: the original meaning of this word is **conduct**. Our conduct relates to our manner, to the way we walk, to the way we act, to our general deportment, and not to our words alone. We are to be an example in our gentleness of demeanor. We should not slam doors, nor be boisterous, nor uncouth, nor thoughtless of others. In every way we are to be gentle and kind and considerate, and not rude.

"Let Your Light Shine"

Those who are begotten to the new nature should strive to be examples to everybody of what Christians ought to be. The kind of work we are engaged in should be honest. It may be secular work, yet it should be done as unto the Lord, carefully, faithfully, not merely as men-pleasers, but in singleness of heart, as servants of God; "for we serve the Lord Christ." The walk of the Christian should be in charity—love—in sympathy, in benevolence, in kindness of word and conduct. A generally sympathetic spirit should pervade his words and deeds, his entire behavior. The Heavenly Father loved mankind: while they were yet sinners He so loved the race that He gave the choicest Treasure of His heart for man's recovery. And He still loves the world, and is fitting the Church to be the blessers of the world in the future. So any begotten of the Lord's Spirit should have a transforming influence at work in his life—an influence that will manifest itself even to those who are out of the way, those who have not yet been blessed with the Light of God.

Our text also reads: "Be thou an example in spirit." This phrase, "in spirit," is not found in the original, but the thought seems proper enough: we are to show kindness of spirit, of disposition, to all. The spirit that animates us at all times should be the spirit, the mind of the Lord.

We are exhorted to be examples "in faith." The Apostle's exhortation applies to us all. The Christian's faith is also manifested to others in his conduct, his words, his course in life. If he is full of faith, he will not be murmuring against the experiences of life as they come, against the providences of the Lord. The Almighty has accepted us as His children; we should have continual and implicit confidence in Him, and whoever has true faith has this confidence. If any of us lack faith in God we shall not manifest faith to others, nor inspire faith in them.

We are to be examples "in purity." There is a purity that goes with all that pertains to God and to His Word—a loftiness of standard, which is not to be found elsewhere. There are people in heathen lands who live more or less chaste lives, but there is nowhere so high a standard as in the Christian religion. Everything impure is contrary to God. Purity is one of the component elements of Christian character. As the Apostle said on another occasion, we are to be "first **pure**, then peaceable, gentle."

Living Epistles, Known and Read

In all these ways each of God's people should be living lessons, living epistles, wherever they go; they should be examples to the world. Whether the world believe what we preach or not, we should manifest these qualities which they cannot but approve and respect. This example will bear fruitage in due time, if not now. Every Elder, like Timothy, should be especially careful of his conduct, his words, his example. The Church has declared by choosing such a one Elder that they believe him to be an example of the fruitage of the grace of God in the heart.

The Apostle's counsel to Timothy: "Let no man despise thy youth," should be looked upon as advice not only to Timothy, but to all Elders of the Church who are young in years, that they so conduct themselves as to be examples of the Flock, that their deportment and ability to "rightly divide the Word of Truth" be such that none will have cause to slight the Message they bring, or to think of them as immature and unfit to lead the Flock of God.

Let every child of God, the younger as well as the older, strive to be an example worthy of imitation—an example of earnest, faithful endeavor to copy the Master in his daily life, a pattern of active zeal in the service of our God. We shall not be able while in the flesh to be examples in the full sense of the ultimate glory and beauty of holiness which will be ours beyond the veil: we cannot expect this in the present life. Our Lord alone was such a Pattern.

The Apostle Paul urged, "Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ." (1 Corinthians 11:1.) St. Paul was a noble example of earnest endeavor to attain the perfect likeness of Christ, and his love, his zeal, his intense earnestness in striving to copy the Master and to accomplish His will should be an inspiration to us all. Let each of the Lord's children, individually, realize his or her personal responsibility. We are as "a city set upon a hill." Let each ask himself the question: Am I "an example of the believers"?—Z. '14: 200, 201.

Bringing Home the Flock

"Through pastures fair,
And sea-girt paths all wild with rock and foam,
O'er velvet sward, and desert stern and bare,
The flock comes home.

"A weary way,
Now smooth, then rugged with a thousand snares;
Now dim with rain, then sweet with blossoms gay,
And summer airs.

"Through life's dark ways,
Through flowery paths where evil angels roam,
Through restless nights, and long, heart-wasting days,
Christ's "flock" comes home.

"Yet, safe at last,
Within the fold they gather, and are still;
Sheltered from driving shower and stormy blast,
They fear no ill.

"Safe to the fold,
The blessed fold, where fears are never known,
Love-guarded, fenced about with walls of gold,
He leads His own.

"O Shepherd King,
With loving hands, whose lightest touch is blest!
Thine is the Kingdom, Thine the power, to bring
Thy "flock" to rest!"—Poems 68.

David and Jonathan

1 Sam. 20: 32-42.

Golden Text—"There is a friend that sticketh closer than a brother."—Prov. 18:24.

TRUE friendship is a rare flower on our sin-cursed earth, and when it is found and proved it should be greatly prized. It is an element of the original likeness of God. True friendship can never exist in a heart where selfishness reigns; for the moment self-interest is crossed, the false and and fickle friendship begins to decline or proves treacherous.

The friendship of David and Jonathan was evidently of the true kind; for it was proved on the part of both in the furnace of trial, and it held fast through years under circumstances of temptation which meaner souls could never have withstood. It was founded, not upon a mere fanciful whim on the part of either, but upon real moral worth in each; and those points of moral worth were the attractions and bonds of their friendship. Both were devout men of God, men of faith and of godly courage and heroism, and lovers of truth and righteousness; and it was the discovery of these elements of character in each other that knit their souls as one. . . .

Jonathan loved the Lord and his people, and had strong faith in the power of God on their behalf. Like David before Goliath, with faith in God he with his armour bearer approached the garrison of the Philistines, saying, "It may be that the Lord will work for us: for there is no restraint to the Lord to save by many or by few."—1 Sam. 14:6.

In that beautiful friendship there was no spirit of rivalry, no jealousy, no vain glory, although Jonathan was the natural heir to the throne of Israel, and David had been anointed to take his place; though Jonathan was of the royal family and a man of some thirty odd years, while David was but a shepherd youth, probably about twenty-three years of age. Each in simplicity of heart accepted the Lord's appointments as wisest and best, and determined nobly to do his part toward the Lord and toward his people and toward each other. And so Jonathan, co-operating with his father in the duties of his office to Israel so long as the Lord sustained him in power, nobly used the privileges of his position for the protection and preservation of the one whom he knew to be appointed to reign in his stead.

And while Saul, filled with envy, malice, hatred and revenge against this one whom he regarded as his rival and the rival of his house, determined, and continually sought, to slay him, Jonathan, by every means in his power, protected and defended him, even at the risk of his own life.—1 Sam. 20:32, 33.

When David first came to the house of Saul to minister to him, and Jonathan's soul was knit to that of David, "Then Jonathan and David made a covenant because he loved him as his own soul; and [in recognition of the fact that he was the Lord's anointed—the Lord's choice for the kingdom by and by] Jonathan stripped himself of the robe that was upon him, and gave it to David, and his garments, even to his sword and to his bow and to his girdle." Thus they covenanted faithful friendship to each other, being subject in all things to the will of God.

And when David was taking leave of Jonathan to fly for his life from the face of Saul, again they covenanted perpetual friendship. "And David arose out of his place . . . and [approaching Jonathan] fell on his face to the ground, and bowed himself three times [in token of great respect for both the person and office of his friend]; and they kissed one another, and wept one with another until David exceeded." And Jonathan said, "Go in peace, and the Lord be with thee, as he hath been with my father. And [when thou comest into the kingdom] thou shalt not only while I live show me the kindness of the Lord, that I die not; but also thou shalt not cut off thy kindness from my house forever [as he foresaw David might be tempted to do when later the descendants of Jonathan might urge their claims to the throne]: no, not when the Lord hath cut off the enemies of David every one from the face of the earth. . . . And Jonathan caused David to swear again, because he loved him; for he loved him as his own soul."—1 Sam. 20:13-17.

Only once again they met, a year or two later. It was under very similar circumstances, in the wilderness of Ziph. Saul was still hunting for his rival to slay him, and again Jonathan, learning of his situation, sought him out. "And Jonathan went to David into the wood, and strengthened his hand in God. And he said unto him, Fear not; for the hand of Saul, my father, shall not find thee; and thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee; and that also my father knoweth. And [again] they two made a covenant before the Lord." —1 Sam. 23:16, 17.

In this touching narrative there are valuable lessons which we cannot afford to overlook. (1) It shows that true and enduring friendship is possible, though it be of rare occurrence.

(2) It suggests that true and lasting friendship can exist only between noble and unselfish souls, whose wills are fully submitted to the will of God, and who are actuated by the fixed principles of truth and righteousness.

(3) It suggests that if such friendship existed under the dim light of the Jewish law, it ought to be of much more frequent occurrence under the light of the gospel. True, there may not always be just such circumstances to make it manifest, but there are many similar circumstances. There are always temptations to rivalry, to the ignoring of the will and appointments of God and the substituting of one's own will and way.

When tempted thus, let us call to mind the noble examples of Jonathan and Samuel—Jonathan strengthening the hand of David in God, and saying, "Fear not. . . . thou shalt be king over Israel, and I shall be next unto thee:" and Samuel saying of Saul, his rival, "See ye him whom the Lord hath chosen, that there is none like him among all the people!" So let us "in honor prefer one another," and ever rejoice to see the Lord's will and the Lord's way prosper.

The friendship of David and Jonathan seems also to be suggestive of that beautiful accord which shall exist between the glorified Church and the earthly princes who shall be next to them in the Kingdom of God. There will not be a note of discord or rivalry or jealousy between them; for each will be delighted to fill his honored place in the wonderful plan of God, and will love the other as his own soul. Though the Gospel Church will receive the first place of favor offered in the Abrahamic covenant, and the ancient worthies will find themselves **next** in honor, they will rejoice to have it so, because divine wisdom and love have so planned it.

And as David remembered his covenant with Jonathan not to cut off his kindness from the house of Jonathan (2 Sam. 9:1-13), so the glorified Church will remember its covenant to bless the ancient worthies first, and then all the families of the earth who will then be under their jurisdiction. Their loving ministry through the law and prophecies and their noble examples of godly life and character, which have been so helpful to us, while Satan was hotly pursuing us ("as a roaring lion," 1 Pet. 5:8), as Saul pursued David, shall be held in "everlasting remembrance."—Z. '95: 290, 291.

◆

Beset by our own weaknesses with which we were born, surrounded by others who similarly have weaknesses of mind, body and morals, and assaulted, as the Scriptures assure us we are, by Satan and the fallen angels, who seek to ensnare us and divert us from God and from righteousness, is it any wonder that we fail to come up to our own highest ideals, and therefore fail still more seriously to come up to the perfect standards of God's Word?—Z. '15: 62.

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"Do not count, when day is o'er, daily loss from
life's rich store:
But the gains, however small, count them daily one
and all:
Every sweet and gracious word, every pleasant
truth you've heard:
Every tender glance and tone, every kindly deed
you've known:
Let all evil things go by; still with brave endeavor,
try simple joys to multiply.
Thus you'll learn, how large a sum will with faithful
reckoning come."—Z. '96: 9.

◇

Reverence is defined as a feeling of profound respect, often mingled with awe and affection; a feeling of worshipful regard when directed to the divine or sacred: also conduct inspired by, or conformed to, such feeling. "The fear (reverence) of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom." (Psa. 111: 10.) This is the only proper attitude of the creature toward the Creator, the Author of our being, and the Creator, Preserver and Lord of the whole universe. When he speaks, therefore, our ears should be reverently attentive to his voice, and every power alert to do his bidding. Our safety, our happiness, and that nobility of character which prompts to love and gratitude, and which promptly and wisely heeds instruction and advances in knowledge and wisdom, all depend primarily upon our supreme reverence for the Lord. And therefore the Lord would foster and cultivate in us that becoming, filial reverence that is due to his name.—Z. '96:155.

◇

The coronation of God's saints is reserved for the day of surprises.—Z. '08: 222.

◇

"**Only for Jesus!**—Lord keep it forever
Sealed on the heart and engraved on the life!
Pulse of all gladness and nerve of endeavor,
Secret of rest, and the strength of our strife."
—Z. '96: 219.

◇

Whoever takes the step of full consecration does the proper thing and realizes a blessing, and that blessing will continue and increase in proportion as the same spirit continues to guide and control in all the little affairs of life. If a Christian at all, his will is fixed so far as its general purpose and direction go; nevertheless this is not enough—there might be a firmness, a positiveness of the will as respects the great fact of consecration, yet a slackness as respects the little details of everyday life. Our suggestion is that this fixity of purpose should be extended **to all of life's matters**—that the words of our mouths, the meditations of our hearts, and so far as possible every act of life might speak forth the praises of him who hath called us out of darkness into his marvelous light.—Z. '07: 5.

◇

Development of character implies a variety of experiences and tests.—Z. '01: 232.

HOW TO LOVE GOD PERFECTLY

The definition here given of the love due to our Creator is all comprehensive: our hearts, our affections, must all reverence and love him: our souls, our being, our bodies, must all be controlled by love for God; our minds must similarly recognize, reverence, appreciate and love the Lord, and our strength of mind or body must recognize him as worthy of every loving service we can render. Not only so, but our hearts, minds, etc., must not be divided in their love—the Lord must be first with us in every sense of the word. This means the full consecration of time, talent, influence, everything that we possess—it means a condition of heart that is unknown to the vast majority even of those who are justified by faith in the precious blood, and who have a measure of peace with God through our Lord Jesus. This fulness of love for the Father represents not the beginning of the consecrated Christian's condition, but its fulness, its completeness. It represents not his attitude at the time he enters the school of Christ to learn of him, but the condition he must attain to before he can reach the mark or be ready for graduation to the heavenly condition.—Z. '06: 300.

◇

St. Paul intimates that the seventh day of the Law Sabbath typified the present condition of the Lord's people enjoying rest, peace and Divine favor even under imperfect conditions; but the true Sabbath will come for us when we shall have experienced our resurrection change. Then we shall have rest from sin. We shall also have rest from our own weaknesses and imperfections; for all of these will be gone. The New Creatures will be beings without flaw, blameless and irreprovable. "It is sown in weakness; it is raised in power. It is sown in dishonor; it is raised in glory. It is sown a natural body; it is raised a spiritual body." The weaknesses of others will no longer cause us unrest. The rest of the glorified condition of the Church will be perfect.—Z. '13: 330, 331.

◇

The Lord Jesus . . . has very clearly informed us that to follow in His steps will mean trials and difficulties in the flesh. He says, "In the world ye shall have tribulation." (John 16: 33.) St. Paul repeats the sentiment, saying, "We must through much tribulation enter into the Kingdom of God"; and again in our text he emphasizes the thought, saying, "yea, and all that will live godly in Christ Jesus **shall suffer persecution.**" (Acts 14: 22; 2 Tim. 3:12.) **There is no other way to enter the Kingdom than by self-sacrifice, deadening of the flesh, mortifying it.** In proportion as the New Creature grows, the old creature perishes, until the sacrifice shall have been completed in death.

The Lord's people should thoroughly understand the terms and conditions upon which they have been called. They should therefore not think it strange when trials come upon them, no matter how fiery, no matter how severe.—Z. '12: 325.

Old Corn Gems

NUMBER SIXTY-SEVEN

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The Mark of Perfect Love

Oh Lord, we thank thee thou hast set
A Mark of perfect love
Which we must reach ere we can win
Approval from above.

For, in the reaching of that Mark,
Our characters are built,
Which thou requirest of all those
Whom Christ has freed from guilt.

We consecrate to follow him
Along the "narrow way";
And so we strive to overcome,
And grow, from day to day.

And "perfect love"—what does it mean?
Must we attain thereto?
And actually love, and perfectly,
Our God and brother true?

E'en so, we actually must love
Our Father, first and best,
And love our "Elder Brother," as
In him we find true rest.

And then our enemies we love;
We seek to do them good!
We ever try to render them
The services we should.

Ah yes, 'tis actual, perfect love
We truly must attain;
But, oh, how often do we fail!
And failure gives us pain—

Because this creature of pure love
In sin-racked body lives;
But, praise his name, our Advocate
His loving service gives.

So, perfect will and perfect love
Are handicapped till we
In his own likeness shall awake—
Like him for e'er to be!—Z. '10:315.

What a matter this is to guard the tongue! Truly the Apostle said that he who is able to conquer his tongue is able to conquer his whole body. It is so easy to say something that ought not to be said, it is so easy for the majority to repeat an evil rumor, to cast a reflection upon the character of another, to assassinate in this manner, or at least to wound or injure, the interests or feelings or good name of another. Let us more and more in this particular also seek to be like our Lord, seek to speak as other men do not speak, and thus show forth the praises of him who hath called us out of darkness into his marvellous light.—Z. '05:58.

◆

What a comfort it is amidst all discouragements to know that under all circumstances the spirit of Christ in us is as sweet incense to God. And the reward of his constant approval is richer than all the unwholesome sweets of ambition gained by corrupting the Word of God.—Z. '05:360.

◆

O, how rich is our condition! How wonderful are the Lord's bounties granted to those who are of humble and contrite heart and who possess the hearing of faith! Let us indeed abide in him, in his love, and in possession of the bounties he has provided for our refreshment.—Z. '05:31.

◆

Recognizing that we are all defective according to the flesh, that none of us come up to the divine standard of perfection, and that our only perfection is that of the heart, the will, we must not wonder if occasionally we have trials and testings, aggravations, one from the other, though it must be the will, the desire, the intent of each to provoke one another to love and good works and not to anger, hatred and evil works. (Heb. 10:24.) For ourselves we must recognize the very highest standard of God-likeness, and as for others of the Body we must be prepared to allow our love for them and for the Lord to cover a multitude of blemishes should they appear to us. And each one, in proportion as he or she follows this course, is pleasing to the Lord, is pure in heart—a copy of God's dear Son—and, covered with the robe of the Redeemer's merit, is considered from God's standpoint, not according to his imperfect flesh, but according to his perfect-intentioned heart or will.—Z. '07:179.

◆

Let us see if the days and hours as they pass are spent in a consecrated manner; let us note to what extent moments and days are spent in some selfish manner, or wasted upon others beyond the reasonable requirements of duty as marked out in the divine Word. Let us see to what extent we perform our vows unto the Lord; let us take note of what of time or influence or money we are using in the divine service and what proportion this bears to the whole.—Z. '05:380.

◆

We still need the humility which will keep close watch upon every word and act and thought, even with a view to having all in complete subjection to the will of the Lord that we be found not fighting against the Lord or against the Truth or against the brethren. How careful we should be to watch for the leadings of the Lord's providences, not only in our own experiences, but also in the words and experiences of others, and particularly to measure everything by the divine standards and not by our own opinions and preferences!—Z. '07:228.

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OLD CORN GEMS

NUMBER SIXTY-SEVEN

"And they did eat of the OLD CORN of the land on the morrow after the Passover . . . and the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the OLD CORN of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year." Joshua 5:11-12.

A SAFE RULE

"WHERE A BROTHER GIVES AN INTERPRETATION OF A SCRIPTURE WHICH DIFFERS FROM THAT GIVEN BY BROTHER RUSSELL, AND BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION SEEMS REASONABLE AND IN HARMONY WITH THE PLAN OF GOD, THEN WE BELIEVE IT A SAFE RULE TO FOLLOW BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION, FOR THE REASON THAT HE IS THE SERVANT OF THE CHURCH, SO CONSTITUTED BY THE LORD FOR THE LAODICEAN PERIOD; AND THEREFORE WE SHOULD EXPECT THE LORD TO TEACH US THROUGH HIM. WHERE THERE ARISES A DOUBT IN THE MIND AS TO WHICH INTERPRETATION IS CORRECT, THEN IT IS ALWAYS SAFER TO RESOLVE THAT DOUBT IN FAVOR OF BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION. WE BELIEVE SUCH TO BE IN HARMONY WITH THE LORD'S WILL." Z. '18:51.

Acceptable to God

"Let the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in Thy sight, O Lord, my strength and my Redeemer."—Psa. 19:14.

HOW BEAUTIFUL in the sight of right-thinking men is a well-balanced, self-possessed and disciplined character! And in contrast with such, how unlovely are the undisciplined and ungoverned—the selfish, the unjust, the unkind and the violent-tempered! Naturally, the one awakens in us emotions of pleasure and admiration, and the other, of pain. And if such is the appreciation of virtue and the abhorrence of the lack of it among men who have lost much of the original image of God, with what a keen appreciation must they be observed by a pure and holy God!

Men of the world who have no personal acquaintance with God have no special thought as to how they appear in His sight; but with what carefulness should those who love Him and who value His approval study to conform their conduct to His pure and holy mind! True, all who are "begotten again," notwithstanding their imperfections and shortcomings through inherited weaknesses, are acceptable to God through Christ, whose robe of righteousness amply covers them; but the measure of their acceptableness to God, even through Christ, is only to the extent that, while availing themselves of His imputed righteousness, they are earnestly striving to attain actually to the standard of perfection. By so doing they manifest their real appreciation of the Divine favor.

With what confusion and chagrin would one be covered who, in the midst of a fit of violent temper or an unjust or mean transaction, unworthy of his dignity or his profession, should be suddenly surprised by the appearance of a beloved friend of high and noble character! And yet, the eye of such a One is ever upon us. And only to the extent that we dismiss this thought from our minds, or else that we undervalue the Lord's opinion and approval, can we allow the evil propensities of the fallen nature to run riot.

"Wherewithal Shall a Young Man Cleanse His Way"

Realizing the downward tendency of the old nature, how constantly should the above prayer of the Psalmist be in the minds of God's consecrated children! But how, one inquires, may the difficult task of subduing the inherent depravity be accomplished? It is hard for one, particularly under exasperating circumstances, to control a hasty or violent temper, for another to bridle a gossiping tongue; and especially if the trials of life to some extent put their colored glasses on the eyes. And then what a host of inherent weaknesses there are, which every one of God's true children realizes and knows that he must strive against, if he would be acceptable with God! The thoughts of our hearts are not manifest to fellow-men until we express them in words or actions; but even the very thoughts and intents of the heart are all open and manifest to God. What a comfort to the honest-hearted!

The Psalmist repeats this inquiry, saying, "Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way?" and then replies, "By taking heed thereto, according to Thy Word." Then he frames for us this resolution: "I will meditate on Thy precepts and have respect unto Thy ways; I will delight myself in Thy statutes; I will not forget Thy Word." (Psa. 119:9, 15, 16.) Here is the secret of a pure and noble life, acceptable to God. It is to be attained, not merely by prayers and righteous resolutions, but, in addition to these, by careful, painstaking **heed**, by systematic and diligent effort at self-cultivation, by care and perseverance in weeding out evil thoughts, and by diligent and constant cultivation of pure, benevolent and noble thoughts, and by nipping in the bud the weeds of perversity before they bring forth their hasty harvest of sinful words and deeds.

But observe, further, that this heed or care is to be taken, not according to the imperfect standard of our own judgment, but according to God's Word. The **standard** by which we test our lives makes a vast difference in our conclusions.

The Psalmist further commends this standard to us, saying: "The Law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul. [That is, if we take heed to our ways according to God's Law, it will turn us completely from the path of sin to the path of righteousness.] The testimony [the instruction] of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple [the meek, teachable ones—clearly pointing out to them the ways of righteousness]. The statutes [the decrees, ordinances and precepts] of the Lord are right [the infallible rules of righteousness], rejoicing the heart of the obedient]. The commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes. The fear of the Lord is clean [not a servile fear, but a noble fear, begotten of love—a fear of falling short of His righteous approval], enduring forever. More to be desired are they [the Law and the testimony of the Lord] than gold; yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honey-comb.

"Keep Back Thy Servant From Presumptuous Sins"

"Moreover, by them is thy servant warned [concerning the dangers of the way and the snares of the Adversary, and concerning everything which is calculated to discourage, or to hinder his growth in grace], and in keeping of them there is **great reward.** Who [in the use merely of his own fallible judgment and without the standard of God's Law] can understand his errors [can rightly judge himself]?"

But when, as we measure ourselves by this standard, we detect and deplore our shortcomings, let us remember the Psalmist's prayer: "Cleanse thou me from secret faults"—thus supplementing our efforts by our prayers.—Psa. 19: 7-12.

But there is still another part of this prayer which the Lord thus puts into our mouths. It reads: "Keep back thy servant also from presumptuous sins: let them not have dominion over me: then shall I be upright, and I shall be innocent from the great transgression." Let us consider what kind of sins would be presumptuous sins. To presume signifies to take for granted without authority or proof. A presumptuous sin would, therefore, be taking for granted and asserting as truth something which God has not revealed, or the perversion of what He has revealed. To claim and hold tenaciously as a part of God's Plan any doctrine, merely on the ground of fallible human reason and without Divine authority, would therefore be a presumptuous sin.

Of this nature is the sin of those who malign the Divine character by boldly teaching the blasphemous doctrine of eternal torment without warrant from the Scriptures, and in direct contradiction of them. And there are many other sins of greater and less degree which partake of the same character. But the words here seem to refer directly to some particular error into which there is danger of drifting—"Then shall I be innocent from **the great transgression**"—evidently, **the sin unto death** referred to by the Apostles also. (1 John 5:16; Heb. 6: 4-6; 10: 26-31.) Such a sin would be that of presuming upon the love of God to bring us salvation, even though we should wilfully refuse it through the channel which He has appointed—the precious blood of Christ, shed for our redemption.

"Blessed Is the Man Whose Delight Is in the Law of the Lord"

Well, indeed, may we pray and strive to be kept back from presumptuous sins—sins of pride or of arrogant self-will which does not meekly submit to the will of God! Let us, beloved, beware of the slightest tendency toward pride and self-will, or the disposition to be wise above what is written, or to take for granted what God does not clearly promise. "Then," indeed, if we watch and strive against the very beginning of that proud and haughty spirit which surely presages a fall, we shall be "innocent from **the great transgression.**"

"Blessed is the man whose **delight** is in the Law of the Lord, and who doth meditate therein day and night. He shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season; his leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper." (Psa. 1:1-3.) If we make the Word of God the theme of our constant meditation, its principles will soon be assimilated and become part of our mental makeup, making our characters more beautiful and commendable both to God and to our fellowmen; and in harmony with this habit of the mind the acts of life will speak.

The purified fountain will send forth sweeter waters than formerly, bearing refreshment and good cheer to all who come in contact with it. It will make happier homes—better husbands, better wives and better children. It will sweeten the temper, soften the voice, dignify the language, cultivate the manners, ennoble the sentiments and lend its charming grace to every simple duty. It will bring in the principle of love and cast out the discordant elements of selfishness. Thus it will make the home the very garden-spot of earth, where every virtue and every grace will have ample room to expand and grow.

It will not only thus favorably affect the individual and the home-life, but it will go out into the avenues of trade, and truth and fair-dealing will characterize all the business relations; and thus will God be honored by those who bear His name and wear the impress of His blessed Spirit.

While the heights of perfection cannot be reached so long as we still have these imperfect bodies, there should be in every child of God very perceptible and continuous growth in grace, and each step gained should be considered but the stepping-stone to higher attainments. If there is no perceptible growth into the likeness of God, or if there is a backward tendency, or a listless standstill, there is cause for alarm.

Let us constantly keep before our eyes the model which the Lord Jesus set for our example—that model of the complete fulfilment of the will of God, in which the whole Law was kept blamelessly. Let us follow His steps of righteousness and self-sacrifice as nearly as a full measure of loving zeal and faithfulness and loyalty to God will enable us to do, and we shall have a blessed sense of the Divine approval now, and the glorious reward of Divine favor in due time.—Z. '11:179, 180.

When Will Our Opportunities for Service Cease?

THE question has frequently been asked, If after the door of opportunity to enter the "narrow way" shall have closed and one should then find himself still in heart accord with the Lord and his Plan, but cut off from all opportunity of service, should he believe that he has made his calling and election sure?

We answer that we would not think that this fact would constitute a ground or warrant for concluding that such had made his calling and election sure. It might be considered, rather, as an indication to the contrary, yet we think we should not, under such circumstances, be discouraged, but conclude that if our hearts had continued loyal to the Lord we were now merely enduring a test of faith and that the proper course would be to stand firm in the faith, in the spirit of the words of Job, "Though he slay me, yet will I trust in him." It seems that the Lord desires his people to abide in his love continually and has made the arrangement that our standing in him, our peace of heart, shall depend upon our faithfulness to conscience and to duty, or rather our faithfulness to duty, according to our conscience.

Evidently the condition which the Lord desires most is that we shall day by day keep close to him; that we shall see that no day passes by in which we have not striven to do the Lord's will, and that if we have failed to do the Divine will, according to our conception of that will, we should at once take the matter to the Throne of Grace in prayer and supplication until we have the realization of Divine forgiveness and reconciliation. Thus living day by day we may feel sure that we are abiding in the love of God and may feel each day that so far as that day is concerned we are abiding in that condition which would make sure to us the "prize" at the end of the way.

Made Supplication to Him Who Was Able to Save Him Out of Death

But if in any degree we should seem to be separated in a measure from the Lord and his love and lack the realization of his favor we should not conclude that we are not in the right condition of full acceptance with him, because we know that our Lord, as he neared the end, had considerable fear of this kind. He had a fear that he had not fully complied with all the conditions, and "with strong crying and tears" he made supplication "to him who was able to save him out of death, and was heard in respect to the thing which he feared." He feared that he had been unfaithful; he feared that in some way, unintentionally, he had failed to conform to the Divine requirements.

Again, we remember that in his dying hour, it was the Father's will that he should experience a full cutting off and hiding of the Father's face, so that he cried out in his anguish, "My God! My God! Why hast thou forsaken me?" What have I done that I should be denied fellowship with thee? And so, if this was true of him, it might be true of any of his disciples; our conscience, therefore, might not always be a safe guide as to what would constitute an acceptable condition with the Lord. So the Apostle Paul, after referring to the fact that others might misjudge us and that it was a small thing that he should be judged of his brethren or of any man, continued, "Yea, I judge not mine own self." I realize that I am not competent to judge even my own case. There is One that judgeth me, even God.

So it is in our experiences. We have found some with very sensitive consciences who are continually inclined to reprove themselves as always failing, as always doing something wrong. It seems to be their normal condition to feel so. Such persons might easily make a mistake respecting the diagnosis of their case. Others, the very reverse of this, continually feel well satisfied with themselves, even though they are not in full harmony with the Lord. So those who are overly conscientious and those who are lacking in conscientiousness in their judgment of themselves, should seek to make up these deficiencies of their own conscience so that they can arrive at a right judgment, can be in harmony with the Divine judgment.

Christian Growth Necessary

At the same time we are to remember that all that we can do that will constitute us acceptable in coming to the Lord will be the exercise and cultivation of faith. Our faith should not be in ourselves, because such faith is merely self-confidence. We are to realize that we have nothing that would commend us to God. We are to realize that we come short continually; that it is not possible for any one to come up to the perfect standard; therefore we are to be continually in the attitude represented in the Lord's prayer, "Forgive us our trespasses," feeling sure that we have trespassed, and seeking meanwhile to minimize these trespasses, to be so faithful that these will become less and less daily in the Lord's sight.

But from our own experience we would consider the proper thought to be, "Have I lived today as best I knew how, and are the accounts right with the Lord, and is there anything that I can do better tomorrow than today, in the light of the experiences of today? Can I be wiser, can I be stronger, can I be more self-sacrificing?" When we are doing the

best we can do, we are to know that the Lord does not expect more than that of us.

We remember a remark made by a brother at one of the conventions. He said, "I am doing the very best that I can, and I am trusting in the Lord." We remember our reply that we thought that a very wonderful testimony—for any one to be able to say, conscientiously, that he was doing the very best that was possible for him to do. Personally, **we never know** when we have done the very best possible. We always try the next day to see if we can do better; but if any one has reached the place where he has done the very best possible, he has surely done well. We feel at times that we have done the very best, yet we very rarely close a day in which we come to the conclusion that we have done the very best we could possibly do in every particular, in every item of the day; and so we try to mark those points in which we might have done better, that we may have the benefit of those experiences on the morrow.

But if our hearts have been loyal to the Lord and we have been serving him to the best of our ability, striving to bring every word and every action and every thought into full subjection to the will of God—if this has been our endeavor, then we may feel satisfied that God is pleased with us; that we are in the condition that he has declared is acceptable with him; that we are in the way to gain the great "Prize" he has to give. But we are not guaranteed this for the **morrow,** but only for **that moment;** and so the Lord wishes us to live moment by moment and to realize his blessing moment by moment, and not to think that our case is decided and ended. Our question, then, should not be, "Will we feel satisfied at some future time?" but rather, "What is my experience **now, this moment?"** Sufficient unto each day are its trials and difficulties.—Z. '10:296.

Christian Character

"If ye do these things, ye shall never fall."—2 Peter 1:10.

"GIVING all diligence, add to your faith virtue [fortitude]; and to virtue, knowledge; and to knowledge, temperance [self-control]; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity [love]." Then he adds, "If ye do these things ye shall never fall."—2 Pet. 1:5-7, 10.

This is a very strong assurance—that if we do these things we are **sure to stand approved of God.** We do well, therefore, to consider them with **special care.** Here are eight elements which must go toward making up the Christian character, the one to be added to the other and assimilated by the spiritual germ of the new nature, until the embryo New Creature is formed; and then it must continue to grow and develop. Look at them again. They are:

1. Faith.
2. Virtue [fortitude].
3. Knowledge.
4. Temperance [self-control].
5. Patience.
6. Godliness.
7. Brotherly kindness.
8. Charity [love].

A "Thus, Saith the Lord," Should Be the End of All Controversy

Now for a little self-examination. Let each ask himself: (1) Have I the **faith** to which the Apostle here refers; not faith in every thing or every person, but faith in God—in his Plan of redemption through the vicarious, or substitutionary sacrifice of Christ, and in all his rich promises built upon that sure foundation? Do I trust him implicitly? Is a "Thus saith the Lord" the end of all controversy, the solution of all doubts and the restful assurance in every perplexity?

(2) Am I endeavoring to lead a **virtuous** life? This, to the child of God, consecrated to be a living sacrifice, implies much more than merely abstaining from evil. It implies living truthfully, that is, **true to his covenant,** which to wilfully violate would be equivalent to swearing falsely. It is **fortitude,** strength of character in righteousness. It implies the cultivation of the strictest integrity in our dealings, both with God and with our fellowmen, scrupulous honesty, justice and truth being the only standards.

The Psalmist clearly defines it thus, saying, "He that walketh uprightly, and worketh righteousness, and speaketh the truth **in his heart.** He that backbiteth not with his tongue, nor doeth evil to his neighbor; in whose eyes a vile person is condemned; but he honoreth them that fear the Lord. He that sweareth to his own hurt and changeth not [who will not violate a contract found to be unfavorable to himself]. He that putteth not out his money to usury [taking unjust advantage of the necessities of others], nor taketh reward against the innocent. He that doeth these things shall never be moved." (Psa. 15:2-5.) Such a one is a virtuous man, a man of fortified or strong character. How we need to invoke Divine assistance here! and how critically to judge ourselves!

(3) Am I endeavoring day by day to gain a more thorough and complete **knowledge** of God, of the Plan revealed in his Word, and of the special features now in operation, that I may co-operate with him in its execution; and of his will concerning **me** in the particular relationships and conditions in which I now stand—**irrespective of my own will and disposition in any matter?** Am I striving to gain this knowledge of God and of his righteous will concerning us, as revealed through his Word, by the holy Spirit? Neglect of this Divinely appointed means of knowledge is equivalent to setting up our own imperfect standard of righteousness and ignoring the Divine standard. It is, therefore, important that we give **all diligence** to the study of the Divine

Oracle, that we may be fortified in faith and works accordingly.

(4) Am I **temperate**, moderate, exercising **self-control** in all things—in eating, in drinking, in home arrangements, in conduct, in thoughts, in words, in deeds? Do I realize that self-control is one of the most important elements of good character? "He that ruleth his spirit is better than he that taketh a city," is the counsel of the Wise Man; and many a victorious general has yet to learn to conquer and control **himself.** Self-control has to do with all our sentiments, thoughts, tastes, appetites, labors, pleasures, sorrows, and hopes. Its cultivation, therefore, means a high order of character-development. Self-control, accompanied by faith, fortitude, knowledge from on High, implies increased zeal and activity in Divine things, and increased moderation in earthly things. In judgment, in conduct, in the regulation of temporal affairs, etc., "Let your moderation [temperance, self-control] be known unto all men." (Phil. 4:5.) Let them see by our thoughtful (not rash and hasty), careful and considerate demeanor, in every affair of life, that we honor our profession.

(5) Am I **patient** under trial and discipline, keeping my feelings always under the control of enlightened reason, letting patience have its perfect work in cultivating the character, however severely the plow and the harrow may break up the sub-soil of the heart, meekly submitting to the discipline in every case? and am I submitting **cheerfully** under the mighty hand of God, in his work of preparing me for a place in his Kingdom soon to be established? The Greek word from which patience is here translated means **cheerful endurance.**

(6) Am I carefully observing and endeavoring to **pattern my character** and course of action **after the Divine model?** If a parent, or in any position of authority, am I using that authority as God uses his—not for selfish purposes, to make a boast of it, or in any way to oppress or trample upon the God-given individual rights of those under such authority, but for the blessing and advantage of those under it, even to the extent of self-denial, with patience, dignity and grace, and not with boastful imperiousness, which is the attitude of tyrants?

If a son, or one under authority to any extent, do I consider the example of loving obedience furnished us in the example of our dear Lord? His delight was to do the Father's will at any cost to himself. As a man, under the kingdoms, authorities, of this world, and as a youth, under the authority of earthly parents, he was loyal and faithful (Matt. 22:21; Luke 2:51); yet all of this earthly authority was exercised by his personal inferiors, even though they were his legal superiors. How beautifully we shall be able to grace and fill whatever station we occupy in life, if we carefully study and copy **godliness** (God-likeness), whether we be princes or peasants, masters or servants!

(7) Does **brotherly-kindness** characterize all my actions? Does it cause me to make due allowance for the inherited weaknesses and circumstantial misfortunes of others? Does brotherly-kindness deal patiently and helpfully so far as wisdom, with a view to the correction of those faults, may dictate; and even at the expense of self-interest, if necessary and prudent?

If, as I look myself squarely in the face, I recognize deformity of character, do I thankfully accept a brother's proffered aid and meekly bear reproof, determining that by the grace of God I will overcome such dispositions, and prove myself a help rather than a hindrance to others, if it should even cost my life to do it; and that I will no longer foster my old dispositions, but will plunge into activity in the service of God with those who should have my co-operation in service, instead of being a burden to them?

(8) Have I **charity (love unfeigned)** for the unrighteous and unlovely, as well as for the good and beautiful—a love which is ever ready to manifest itself in wise and helpful activity for saint and sinner; a love which pities, helps, comforts, cheers and blesses all within its reach; which longs for the grand opportunities and power and glory of the incoming Age, chiefly for its privileges of scattering universal blessing; and which, in harmony with that sentiment, utilizes every present opportunity wisely and in harmony with the Divine Plan for the accomplishment of the same end—thus manifesting and cultivating the disposition which must be found in every member of that glorious company which will constitute the King's Cabinet in the incoming Age? If this disposition is not begun, cultivated and developed **here,** we shall not be considered worthy of that office **there.**

Just as in a well-kept orchard pruning, trimming and cultivation are necessary to accomplish the desired end of fruitfulness, so must we be watchful and take necessary precautions to prevent blight and decay of character, and to guard against the intrusion of evil powers and influences calculated to sap the life of the New Creature. By resisting the Devil he will flee from us; and by patient continuance in well-doing an increasing measure of development will result. "If these things be in you and abound," says the Apostle Peter (that is, if you have them in some measure and keep on cultivating them, so that they abound more and more and **rule** in you), "they make you that ye shall be neither barren [idle] nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ." The Truth is for such: "Light is sown for the **righteous,"** and they are **sure to get it.** They shall not walk in darkness. 'If any man will **do** the will of God, he shall know of the doctrine. (John 7:17.) "But he that lacketh these things is blind, and cannot see afar off, and hath **forgotten** that he was purged from his old sins." . . .

With all our striving and watchfulness, however, we shall not be able, in our present condition, to reach our ideal. Perfection is something which can only be approximated in the present life. But **the measure of our effort to attain it** will prove the measure of our faithfulness and earnest desire to do so. And that effort will not be unfruitful.—Z. '11: 134-136.

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While we see the storm coming, let us remember the words of the Prophet, "We will not fear though the earth (society) be removed, and though the mountains (kingdoms) be carried into the midst of the sea (anarchy)."—Psa. 46:2; Z. '11:67.

Proper Mortification of the Body

"For if ye live after the flesh, ye shall die: but if ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."—Romans 8:13.

MANY times have the children of the Lord read these words of the Apostle. Many times have His true saints pondered over their solemn import. Many times, too, have those less saintly read them, and instead of taking the lesson to themselves, have applied it to their worldly neighbors and allowed the lesson to lose its force upon themselves. But the most saintly of God's people need, as the Prophet declared of Israel of old, "precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little and there a little." (Isaiah 28:10, 13.) Our poor earthen vessels are very leaky and fragile, and need constant replenishment from the great Fountain of Truth and Life.

So let us again ponder over these gracious words of the Lord's mouthpiece and have their lesson impressed more deeply upon our minds. St. Paul is here addressing the Church of Christ only. He is not addressing the world. The Church have entered into a solemn Covenant with the Lord to lay down in sacrifice earthly things, the earthly nature. The Apostle assures us that if we succeed in faithfully laying down our earthly life with all its hopes and prospects, we shall live. It is not merely that we shall covenant at the beginning of our Christian course to do this, but we must carry out to its completion this mortification of our body—the deeds of the body.

The body with its deeds represents **all the human interests**—not merely the weaknesses and infirmities of our fallen condition, and our sinful tendencies. Those, of course, we are to mortify. We are to deaden these at once, as far as is possible. But we are also to sacrifice the earthly interests which are not sinful, but which would prevent our attainment of the glorious hope set before us, which would in any degree handicap us in the Heavenly race. Are we all doing this day by day? As we mingle with others and come into contact with the world and its influences, as we engage in the affairs of life, are we continually mortifying the deeds of the body? Are we crucifying the flesh? Are we dying daily to the things of earth? Are we living more and more fully each day as New Creatures in Christ?

Improper Mortification of the Flesh

Day by day we shall find opportunities to mortify the deeds of our flesh; and this we must do, if we would live and grow as New Creatures. Some very mistaken notions are held by many in the world as to the proper mortification of the body. Some of our Catholic friends make a mistake in their zeal to do what they consider mortifying the flesh. For instance, many of them lie on a stone floor instead of on a bed; some will lie down to be walked upon and to be made a mat for others to wipe their feet upon; some will whip themselves until they have lacerated their flesh and then wear a hair jacket, with all the torture that means. These have certain sins in their minds of which they have been guilty, and for which they think they should do penance. With others this penance is not voluntary, but of compulsion by those who are in authority over them. The difficulty with these individuals is that their heads are wrong; they lack the spirit of a sound mind. They mean right; but they have been mistaught, and their consciences are perverted and falsely trained. . . .

Self Discipline for a Purpose

The God of the Bible has, during the Age now closing, been calling out of the world a very special class of mankind. We have faith in this God because the instructions of His Word are reasonable, and because the results of following these instructions are in every way most satisfactory and gratifying. The wonderful fulfilments of its prophecies in the past and in the present are most convincing. The manifestations of His providences and His guidance in the lives of those who have served Him—this God of the Bible—are likewise so marked as to be unassailable. He has given to these "exceeding great and precious promises," which relate to the life which now is and also to that which is to come, and which sustain and strengthen the children of God in all their pilgrimage through this vale of tears to the Heavenly City, "whose Builder and Maker is God."

We are assured in the Holy Word that if we are faithful to our God under present unfavorable conditions and environments, if we are loyal to the principles of Truth and righteousness and to our Covenant of Sacrifice made with Him, we shall have quite a conflict with ourselves and with the sins that are entrenched in our mortal bodies. He tells us, too, that such loyalty to Him will bring persecution and misunderstanding, because of the condition of darkness which now envelops the world of mankind. Yes, we well know that our faithful endeavor to serve the Lord and His Truth will now bring opposition from the world, from our own flesh, and from the great Adversary and all his hosts of darkness; for all these are leagued against us as followers of Christ—our Savior, our leader, our Pattern.

We are to mortify the **deeds** of the body, but not the **body** itself without a **purpose**. There must be a reason, a Scriptural reason for so doing, a definite and worthy object before us in all our work of mortification. We might just as well go out and commit suicide at once, drink some poisonous acid, and think, "Now I have mortified my body," as to inflict torture upon ourselves, thinking through it to correct our sins or weaknesses. Only a greatly perverted mind and conscience could entertain such a wild idea. Whatever mortification is practised by the child of God should be actuated by the Spirit of God, the mind of God. "If ye **through the Spirit** do mortify the deeds of the body, ye shall live."

There is today a meaning in the word **mortification** as ordinarily used, which is altogether different from the sense of the word as used by the Apostle. We sometimes say in speaking of a certain experience, "I was greatly mortified"; meaning that the experience produced humiliating or embarrassing results. But the deeds of the body are not thus dealt with. We are to **mortify** in the sense of **putting to death** the deeds of the flesh. This is the primary meaning of the word.

We are striving day by day to develop the fruits of the Holy Spirit—fortitude, meekness, gentleness, patience, self-control, long-suffering, brotherly-kindness, love. It is while endeavoring to put these qualities of character into practise, to increase this blessed fruitage in our hearts and lives, that the mortification, the killing, of the deeds of the body is accomplished; for all the conditions about us are unfavorable. If conditions were favorable, if every one about us should encourage us in the good way and commend us for our course, the mortification of our flesh could not so well be brought about. It is in struggling against **adverse influences,** in encountering **opposition** and by conquering its power over us, that we gain strength and development as New Creatures in Christ. There will be no mortification of the flesh in the Millennial Age. But there is now. And it is this mortification of the deeds of the body, the crucifying of the flesh with all its earthward tendencies, that will, if persevered in, bring us the eternal life—the glory, honor, immortality—promised to the overcoming saints of the Gospel Dispensation. But if we take any other course we shall not gain the prize which has been offered to us in this Age.

No Second Probation for the Church

There is in our text no intimation of a second probation for any of those addressed. These words were spoken to those who in the present existence are on trial for **life.** The Apostle does not say, If ye live after the flesh ye will lose the prize now offered, but you will have another trial for life later on. Neither does he say, If ye live after the flesh ye shall suffer endless torment. But his words speak of a present probation, the issue of which will be **life** or **death,** an eternity of existence in bliss and happiness or an endless cessation of existence. Nor is the Apostle here discussing the terms of salvation by the exercise of faith in the atoning blood of Christ. All this is taken for granted. He is speaking here, not of what we **believe,** but solely of how we are **to live.**

Shall we, because of this, spring to the conclusion which many take, that it is immaterial what we believe, so long as we live well? By no means; and those who would so construe these words of the Apostle take but a very shallow view of his teachings, one which would rob them of all their import. But noticing that his words were addressed to those who have already exercised saving faith in Christ, and not to the **world** in any manner, we can get a proper understanding of what he meant. The heedless Christian who applies this warning to everybody, allows it to lose all its force upon himself. This is the very reverse of the Apostle's intention. He is talking to the **saints,** to **consecrated believers** in the redemption which is in Christ Jesus, those who have been begotten of the Holy Spirit of God to a new nature, even the Divine. It is for this reason that he says nothing here about the Ransom nor about the Millennial Age of trial for the world. Those who are addressed here are having their trial **now,** and the decision in their cases will be rendered before the world comes into judgment.

The Apostle's warning, therefore, is not at all applicable to the world, but is full of solemn import to the Church. These, having presented their bodies a living sacrifice with Christ, acceptable through Him, having made a sacred covenant with God to live henceforth after the Spirit and to seek those things which are Above, are not at liberty to annul or ignore that covenant. They can never again claim the human nature which they have laid down, for to this they have relinquished all claim and title. If they make any such endeavor, either by ignoring or despising their covenant with God, they forfeit all right and claim to the spiritual nature and reward, which can be attained only by faithfulness to our Covenant of Sacrifice even unto death.

It is therefore logically manifest, even if the Apostle had not so declared, that if **we,** consecrated believers, turn back again to live after the flesh, we shall **die;** that for us to be carnally minded is **death,** while to be spiritually minded is **life** and peace. Our Master's words in Matthew 16:24, 25 are to the same effect—"Whosoever [of My disciples] will save his life shall lose it; and whosoever will lose his life for My sake shall find it."

The Works of the Flesh

An important question then is, What is it to live after the flesh? Our reply is, to live after the flesh is to live in gratification of even the legitimate cravings of the human mind and the human body, when such gratification will prevent our necessary progress in the narrow way and take time which we should use in our development as New Creatures or in the laying down of our lives for the brethren. And this is a very easy thing to do. Let us just cease our efforts to crucify the flesh, to mortify the deeds of the body, and listlessly abandon ourselves to the natural inclinations of the flesh; and at once we begin to gravitate downward, and soon we find resistance more and more difficult, and the path more and more slippery. Then, unless we make heroic and prayerful efforts to regain our lost position, we shall continue to go downward; and the end will be **death.**

St. Paul defines the works of the flesh thus: "Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these: Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revelings and such like." (Galatians 5:19-21.) What moral filth and pollution this describes! But such is the tendency of fallen human nature. Just cease to strive against the old nature, and presently some of these noxious weeds will be flourishing and crowding out the good that remains.

"Ah, well," says one, "I have not all those mean qualities." Well, we are very glad you have not; very few have them all. But, beware, you may not know what manner of spirit you are of, naturally. Be sure that your old nature is not free from inherited, and perhaps a formerly cultivated, tendency in some of these directions. The only safe way is to watch and pray against them, to fill the mind with the things of the Spirit of God, lest ye enter into temptation.

Consider the blessed fruits of the Spirit—love, joy, peace, long-suffering, meekness, gentleness, goodness, faith, self-control. "Against such there is no law." To live in the cultivation of these fruits and graces is to "live in the Spirit," and to "walk in the Spirit." Thus do we not only possess our souls in safety, but we constantly progress in the development of the character of Christ. Indeed, we are only safe while we are growing; there is no safety in standing still. If we cease to grow, we begin at once to retrograde.

The Uses of Discipline

We see, therefore, that the Christian life is of necessity a warfare, a battle, between our new nature and the tendencies of the flesh, supplemented by the attacks from the outside, from the world and the Adversary with his hosts. It is a conflict which we dare not relinquish; for not only is the prize of our High Calling dependent upon it, but also the issues of life and of death are in it. How solemn a thing it is, therefore, to live under these circumstances; for daily and hourly we are standing before the bar of judgment! "If **we** live after the flesh, we shall **die**; but if we through the Spirit, do mortify [put to death, refuse to gratify] the deeds of the body, we shall live." All true sons of God will so live; for, says the Apostle Paul, "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."—Romans 8:14.

If we wilfully **refuse** the leading of God's Holy Spirit, we forfeit the blessed relationship of sons. If we listlessly **disregard** this leading, we greatly endanger that relationship; and as surely as we are sons we shall receive chastisement for our correction and discipline. But while we should be grateful for such a restraining hand, for this rod of correction, if we need it, yet we should be very careful to require as little of it as possible. "If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged" of the Lord. (1 Corinthians 11:31.) However, with the most careful and prayerful watching against the uprisings of the old will and of the flesh, we will doubtless make many mistakes and need some chastening experience from the Lord; "for what son is he whom the Father chasteneth not?"—Hebrews 12:5-12.

Let us, then, remember the exhortation, "My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou art rebuked of Him. For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth." (Hebrews 12:5, 6.) In the difficult course before us, and in view of all the dangers that beset us, the pitfalls laid for our feet, the weakness of our own unaided efforts, how blessed is the promise of our Father in Heaven to give the Holy Spirit to them that ask Him: how precious the assurance that if we are filled with the Spirit we shall not fulfil the desires of the flesh, but shall be enabled to mortify the deeds of the body that we may live! How necessary it is to live very near to the Fountain of all grace, to pray without ceasing and to watch with perseverance!

If at times we know not whether to turn to the right or to the left, know not wherein to walk, let us lift our hearts to the Lord, and wait before Him, remembering the Divine assurance, "Delight thyself in the Lord; and He shall give thee the desires of thine heart. Commit thy way unto the Lord; trust also in Him; and He shall bring it to pass." "In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths." (Psalm 37:4, 5; Proverbs 3:6.) Thus His dear voice brings comfort, strength, rest, in the midst of all the cares and perplexities of the way. "As many as walk according to this rule, peace be on them, and mercy, and upon the Israel of God!"—Galatians 6:16; Z. '15:356-358.

The Race, The Prize, The Course

UNDOUBTEDLY the Apostle does in two of his epistles more or less clearly represent the Christian as running a race to win a prize. But as is usual with all figures and parables there seems to be room for slightly divergent views of his meaning, or rather of how to apply his figure of speech to the recognized facts. Let us be glad that the **facts** are generally very clearly seen. This is the important matter anyway.

Shortly before St. Paul was executed he wrote, "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness." (2 Tim. 4:7, 8.) If this was written six months before he died or even one month or only six days should we understand it to mean that the day before he wrote or the year before it would not have been true? We think not. We must believe also, that when, some time before, the same Apostle wrote, "I am in a strait betwixt two" as to choice between living and dying, he must have felt equally sure that he was at the mark which would win for him the great prize.

But we cannot assume that the Apostle was **always** at that **mark** which would win for him the prize. Surely he, like all of us, was first **begotten** of the Spirit and subsequently **quickened** of the Spirit. Surely during the period between the begetting and the quickening neither he nor we could be at the **"mark"** for the prize.

There must, therefore, be recognized a **mark** or standard of character necessary to the overcomers, which is not possessed at the beginning of the course nor usually for a considerable time thereafter—and a mark or character development which may be possessed a considerable time before death. Since **"love"** is the fulfilling of the law of God" is it not proper that we consider it to be the mark or standard? We have, therefore, assumed that **perfect love** is the standard of our acceptance with God to life eternal: and that to die before attaining it would insure our losing the prize, as death at any time after reaching this mark would insure us the crown of life.

Perfect love includes love for God, for the brethren, for our own, for our neighbors and for our enemies; and much of the teaching of the Scriptures is devoted to the outlining of this perfect love and to encouraging God's people to strive for it; for it represents the fruits of the Spirit which must be grown or developed as the fruits of the vine. The pruning of the branches is to bring this fruitage to perfection, for without it the branch will be cut off from the Vine.

True, some things are **imputed** to us from the time we become members of Christ: purity is imputed, but not the fruit of the Vine—Love. That must be developed. Hence it behooves every Christian to run, to strive, to attain this acceptable standard or mark. All of this is surely true whether the Apostle had in his mind a race illustration or not.

When the Apostle exhorts, "Having done all, **stand!**" it implies that the race has been run, the acceptable mark of character attained before death. And is it not thus with all the "overcomers?" Did we not begin our Christian experience with a mere duty-love toward God and the brethren? Did we not "go on unto perfection"—progressing toward perfect love? True, the Apostle says, "Not as though I were already perfect"—and we with him may well disclaim **actual** perfection. But from the time he **in heart** reached the mark of perfect love, the righteousness or perfection of the Law was reckoned or accounted to him. Hence he adds, "Let as many [of you] as be perfect be thus minded."

But what, if anything, is expected of those who reach this mark of perfect love? Ah! very much! Only after they reach it do they begin to tread in the footsteps of Jesus around and around that mark on its every side. Being actually perfect our Lord needed not to run to get to the mark, for he was actually there, even as the perfect man. It was for him to **"stand" firmly and uncompromisingly** at this "mark" as it is exhorted of us that after "having done all" we should stand complete in him. This **standing** at the mark is the real trial, the real test. To stand is to be an "overcomer" of the world, the flesh and the devil. The **attainment** of the mark is often tedious and slow, but it should not be. Since it is merely a state of the mind it surely might be attained speedily, whereas from lack of zeal many are long years about it and some never gain it,—are never quickened, and will never, therefore, be born of the Spirit.

It is after we have reached the mark of perfect love that we, like our Lord, must endure hardness and fight the good fight. The encouragement held out is the "far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory" promised to those who display special valor in the King's service.

When the Apostle says, "A man is not crowned except he strive lawfully," he in other words is saying that a man must be at the mark of perfect love (the fulfilling of the law) ere his strivings would be meritorious or acceptable in God's sight.

Another possible view of the race is to suppose a line marked out and that line to represent perfect love, each runner being expected to keep as close to that line as possible to the end of life. But this view does not allow for or explain St. Paul's having finished his course weeks or months before he died, nor his "strait betwixt two," years before that.

So then whatever view illustrates the facts best to our minds let us enjoy it, and meantime rejoice that the facts are so clear and plain as to be beyond dispute.—Z. '07:260, 261.

Love a Preventive of Evil Thoughts

THE Law of Love forbids the Lord's people to follow the pernicious example of the world. That Law commands **silence** to all who acknowledge the great Law-Giver, saying, "Speak evil of no man." (Titus 3:2.) Further than this, it declares against evil thoughts, evil suspicions and evil surmisings: Love **"thinketh** no evil." (1 Cor. 13:5.) Love filling our hearts will not only hinder evil conduct and injurious words, but will prevent **evil thoughts.**

Indeed, to impress the importance of this subject, the Great Teacher declares to the pupils in His School, "With what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged." (Matt. 7:2.) Again He instructs them to pray, "Forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us." (Matt. 6:12, 14, 15.) Again He declares, "If ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses, so likewise shall My Heavenly Father do also unto you." (Matt. 18:35.) If **at heart** we treasure up resentment against others, the Heavenly Father will not forgive us.

Purity of Heart An Advanced Stage of Discipleship

Those Christians who are Elders in the School of Christ and who are therefore qualified to teach others, are not only **outwardly clean,** but **inwardly** also. They are washed by the water of the Word from the meanness, the filthiness of the flesh. No longer the slaves of sin, they are not controlled by the desires and the weaknesses of the fallen flesh and the spirit of the world. They do not bear the fruits of unrighteousness—anger, malice, hatred, strife, slander, evil speaking, evil surmising.—2 Cor. 7:1.

A pure heart signifies purity of will, of intention, or purpose, which like the needle to the pole, always turns toward righteousness. Though some sudden or strong temptation may for an instant, through the weakness of the flesh, draw it to the right or to the left, yet it quickly recovers its normal position, which is loyalty to truth and righteousness. A pure heart loves righteousness and hates iniquity. It loves purity and despises impurity and unrighteousness. It loves cleanliness of person, of clothing, of language and of habits. It delights in the society of the pure and shuns all others, knowing that "Evil communications corrupt good manners."—1 Cor. 15:33.

We should distinguish sharply between purity of heart, will, intention, and absolute purity of every act, word and thought; for while the former is possible, the latter is impossible so long as we have our mortal bodies and are surrounded by our present unfavorable conditions. The **standard** set before us is, "Be ye **perfect**, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect." (Matt. 5:48.) By this standard we are to measure ourselves continually, and not by one another; and to this standard we are to seek to bring all the conduct of our lives as well as the meditations of our hearts.—2 Cor. 10:12; Psa. 19:14.

But only our wills (hearts) have yet been transformed and renewed. Our imperfect earthen vessels in which we have this treasure will not be "changed" until our resurrection. Not until then shall we be perfected in the Divine likeness. But now, nothing short of purity of heart, will, intention, can be acceptable to God and bring us a blessing.—2 Cor. 4:7; 1 Cor. 15:52.

How to Maintain Purity of Heart

Those who have made a full consecration of heart to the Lord constitute the pure in heart under the Law of Love. But notwithstanding the purity of their hearts, their intentions, their wills, to fulfil the royal Law of Love, these have a battle to wage. The law of their members, depraved through inherited sin, is the strong law of **selfishness,** in opposition to the new Law to which they have pledged themselves—the Law of **Love.**—Rom. 13:10; James 2:8.

Yet their inability to live up to the requirements of that new Law must be through no lack of will, no lack of intention of the pure, loyal heart. Whatever failure they make, however short they may come at times of obtaining the victory, it **must be solely** because of weakness of the flesh and the besetments of the Adversary, which their pure hearts failed to resist.

Here the Lord's promises are helpful, assuring them that He knows their weaknesses and frailties, as well as the wiles of the Devil and the influence of the spirit of the world, which are contrary to the spirit of Love. He tells them that they may go freely to the Throne of Heavenly grace, there to obtain mercy in respect to their failures to live up to the high standard which their hearts acknowledge and to which they strive to conform. He also assures them that they may find grace to help in every time of need.—Heb. 4:16; Eph. 6:12.

Availing themselves of these mercies and privileges provided through our Great High Priest they are enabled to fight a good fight against sin, to repulse its attacks upon their hearts, and to drive it off, if it has succeeded in invading their flesh.

Thus, and **only thus,** may the Christian keep himself pure in heart and maintain his stand as a fighter of the good fight, one of the overcomers of the world and its spirit.

Self-Deception of An Impure Heart

The mind of the flesh will seek to enter into partnership with the new mind, and will be very ready to accept love as the rule of life, **under certain conditions.** The mind of the flesh would prefer to recognize love in words, in profession, in manners only—a form of godliness without its power.—2 Tim. 3:5.

Gentle manners, such as love would manifest, may be exercised by a selfish heart, deceiving itself and seeking to deceive others. On the lip may be the smile, the word of praise, of kindness, of gentleness, while in the heart may be feelings of selfishness, of grudge, of bitterness, of animosity. Under favorable conditions these hidden motions of sin in the flesh may manifest themselves in more or less carefully worded slander or backbiting or reproach. Or these, continuing to rankle in the heart, may when opportunity affords bring forth anger, hatred, malice, strife and other wicked works of the flesh and the Devil, wholly contrary to the course of a pure heart and at variance with the commandment of the Law of the New Creation—Love.—2 Tim. 3:13; Rom. 7:5; Gal. 5:19-21.

We are to have clearly before our minds the fact that the **ultimate object** of all the Divine dealings with us and for us, and the ultimate signification of all the Divine promises made to us, is the development of **love,** which is godlikeness, for God is love. That this love may be developed in us in the sense and to the degree intended by the Lord, it must come from a pure heart, in full accord with the Lord and His Law of Love, but wholly antagonistic to the Adversary and his law of unholy pride, jealousy and selfishness.—1 Tim. 1:5.

Love Developed by the Principles of Righteousness

To have this kind of love in its proper development there must be a good conscience, well regulated by the Scriptures; therefore the study of God's Word is very important. Meditation upon God's Law is also necessary. We must recognize the fact that there are Divine commands with **principles** behind them and that these principles are to be **incorporated into our characters.** In other words, we are to have the mind of Christ. (1 Cor. 2:16.) As the Apostle says, "Walk in the Spirit and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh."—Gal. 5:16.

This admonition means that we should guard all the actions of life, as well as all our words; for these are a source of either blessing or ill to others and to ourselves. "As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he." (Prov. 23:7.) Some may deceive others for a time, but the Lord knows whether we are seeking to please Him.

We are to endeavor to please the Lord in all things and to watch the outward conduct so that our walk in life may be circumspect. Even though we know that the world will take our very best thoughts and endeavors for hypocrisy, nevertheless, our way is clearly marked out—the way of the Lord—the way of Wisdom.—Z. '12:336, 337.

The Daily Cup

"I will take the Cup of Salvation."—Psalm 116:13.

With a tender smile on His loving face,
My Lord stood holding the Cup of Grace—
"Wilt thou drink, dear one, today?"

O loving Bridegroom, I am so weak!
My enemies even now do seek
To cause me to shrink away.

Today the Cup seems a bitter draught
That cost Thee Thy life, as once Thou quaffed—
Increase my faith, I pray!

"My Dove, I will show thee the care I take
To guard the Cup for thy dear sake,
That thou mayst drink each day."

Oh, Wondrous vision my Lord revealed!
I saw my soul's fierce battle-field,
And the enemies dreaded by me.

The World, the Flesh and Satan wise
Were all made plain in their evil guise,
Plotting Adversity.

"I will fill the Cup with troubles sore,
Pour them in till they're brimming o'er—
I'll make it a Poison draught!

"So bitter 'twill be that its very breath
Will cause her to shrink from such a death!"—
Thus Satan in wickedness laughed.

And the World and the Flesh in blindness lent
Their aid to his wicked, fell intent:
My soul felt their power so dire.

Then I turned and looked at my Bridegroom's face—
The glory from it filled all the place,
But His eyes were flames of fire.

"Begone, ye enemies of My Bride!
The Cup is **Mine!**" He sternly cried:
"I guard this Cup each day.

"And nothing goes in it beyond the power
Of My Bride to bear in her **weakest** hour,
If she look to Me for grace."

Then He turned to me with the tenderest mien—
"My Love, art thou strengthened by what thou hast seen?
Canst thou now the enemy face?"

Dear Lord, forgive me, I humbly cried,
That I should forget that He who died
To redeem my soul, is by my side
And holds the Cup in His hand.

Gladly I take the Loving-Cup,
Gladly I drink as Thou holdest it up;
To share it with Thee is grand!

And if it should be that this is the day
When the flesh, as I drink, shall pass for aye,
Then 'twill be the Cup of Joy.

Oh, wondrous miracle of grace!
The smile on my loving Bridegroom's face
As I pressed my lips to the Cup,

Filled my soul o'erflowing with peace Divine!
And not alone did this peace I find,
But my heart with Joy welled up.

And so each day as I take the Cup
From my Best Beloved, I meekly look up
And whisper a prayer for grace.

And He gives me grace; and Peace Divine,
And Love and Faith and Joy are mine,
As I gaze upon His face.

My hope is in faith the Cup to drain
That I in His Kingdom with Him may reign;
The Cup of Joy I then will claim,
Triumphant by His Grace!—Z. '16:79.

The Book of the Covenant

"The Secret of the Lord is with them that fear him; and he will show them his Covenant."—Psa. 25:14.

THE BIBLE is the great Book of the Covenant. And it like every other feature is considerably hidden, obscured, to the natural man; and its deeper and grander presentations can be seen only through the vail of types and shadows, parables and symbols. And the privilege to look beyond this vail, and to grasp the spirit of the truth, is reserved in large degree for the class mentioned in the text:—"The Secret of the Lord is with them that reverence him, and he will show them his Covenant."

To this class—them that fear the Lord and have his Secret and know his Covenant—the Bible becomes a Chart of the Ages, which shows not only the coast lines and rocks and sand bars of the six thousand years of evil, but also the blessed port then to be reached, and the glorious land of blessing and righteousness and divine favor—the thousand years of Christ's Millennial reign.

To this same class the Bible is a Compass also, which, in connection with the Chart, indicates to them the divinely directed route, by which they are to **escape** certain troubles coming upon the world, and by which they are to **obtain** certain trials and experiences which will be valuable to them in fitting and preparing them to be jointheirs with Christ in the Kingdom. Without this Compass they might indeed be able to judge in clear weather of some portions of the route, but never satisfactorily: and in times of storm and darkness, sun, moon and stars obscured, these, like the world, would be left to the mercy of their own imperfect judgments as to which way to steer, and would feel all the trepidation and uncertainty which so many others feel, were it not for their Compass. But the Compass can be seen, and its directions followed, however dark or obscure the natural light; and following its directions the Lord's people are to attain unto their high calling.

The Lord's Word, in the hands of this same class, may be compared to a Telescope, whose properly adjusted lenses represent the bringing into harmony of the human will with the divine will, in Christ. Careful adjustment is required that we may get a proper focus; but when this condition is obtained, wonderful things through the Bible we see. The far off and indistinct promises are brought nigh, made clear and plain. Hitherto unseen features of the divine character and plan are made manifest; and by the aid of this Telescope the lengths and breadths, the heights and the depths of divine Wisdom and Love and Power may be much more closely approximated by our finite minds.

To this same class the Bible is also a Microscope. The proper adjustment of its lenses—the complete consecration of the human will to the divine—brings to bear upon all the **little** affairs of life a power which magnifies them, and shows us their importance as never seen by us before, and as cannot be seen by the world in general. Through the Bible as a Microscope, we can see that all the trifling affairs of the present life are potentialities, which, under divine direction, are working together for good to "the called ones according to his purpose." It **magnifies** the Law of God, shows us how grand, how sublimely perfect and altogether reasonable, is every requirement of God. It shows us that the weaknesses and imperfections which hinder us from measuring up to the standard of that perfect Law are inherited from father Adam. It shows us that the blemish of sin has affected not only our physical systems, but also our mental and moral faculties; and thus it points out to us that our own reasoning on every subject requires to be re-adjusted and harmonized with the spirit of the divine Law; and thus it enables us by such mental and moral adjustment to obtain what the Apostle calls "the spirit of a sound mind." It not only shows us what we could not see before of our own shortcomings, but graciously it indicates also how after coming into Christ and being covered with his robe of righteousness by faith, we may to some extent make up for these deficiencies by adding to our faith fortitude, and to fortitude knowledge, and to knowledge self-control, and to self-control patience, and to patience piety, and to piety brotherly-kindness, and to brotherly-kindness Love, which things, as they more and more abound, will incite us to cultivate fruitfulness, in the use of the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.—2 Pet. 1:5-8; Z. '97:259:260.

KERNELS KERNELS KERNELS

We believe that the chronology is a blessing.—Z. '14:4.

◆

Because general discontent prevails in this our day, and because God's children, although not of the world, are **in** it, are influenced by it, therefore it becomes daily more necessary that each child of God shall be on the alert to keep his body under, to keep his tongue from murmuring, to keep his heart from discontent, to be filled with thankfulness and gratitude to God in appreciation of all his benefits towards us.—Z. '11:67-8.

◆

BLEMISHES, SPOTS AND WRINKLES DEFINED

Blemishes are the weaknesses and imperfections of the flesh. **Spots** are not those wrong-doings of which we are **unconscious,** but those which we seem to **recognize** as contrary to the will of God. These spots may be of different sizes, representing discrepancies, or various degrees of imperfection. In addition to these weaknesses, failings, faults and mistakes, there may be some little carelessness, indolence, neglect of using an opportunity. These may be considered, not as blemishes or spots, but as **wrinkles** on the Robe of Christ's Righteousness.

St. Paul seems to wish to give us the thought of the absolute purity of the class that will ultimately be presented to the Father by our Lord, when he says that the Church will not have a spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but will be "holy and without blemish." (Eph. 5:27.) This figure, of course, represents perfection of **mind**; for our **bodies** cannot be brought to that condition, because of the fall of Adam.—Z. '13:75.

◆

A pure heart is one which has no selfishness in its motives; it has a desire to do good to all, to do evil to none, to see others blessed as well as itself; to love and serve God perfectly, with all its powers. Our Lord commended this condition of heart, saying, "Blessed are the pure in heart; for they shall see God." It is very evident, then, that such a pure-hearted person is not merely one who starts out in the Christian life with a good intention. **All** who start in the Christian life do so with a good intention; but they must be instructed and educated. They must develop to perfection this purity of heart. —Z. '15:261.

◆

No child of God should go forth in the morning without an earnest petition to Him for Divine supervision of his affairs and for help to walk in the right path. No child of God should retire at night without a retrospective glance on all the day's pathway, to discern to what extent it has been a profitable one and has brought him a day's march nearer the Heavenly Home. Or, if perchance something has occurred of which he should feel ashamed, it is none too soon to go at once to the Throne of Heavenly Grace to obtain mercy and find fresh help for future times of need.—Z. '15:139.

◆

All God's ways will be ours sometime, but not yet; for we are not like Him, perfect.—Z. '15:173.

◆

The patience that is begotten of deep-rooted Christian principle is the kind that will endure all trials and shine the brighter for every affliction through which it may pass.—Z. '94:333.

also 56.16.2)

◆

God can use anything or anybody as His agency, His messenger. But there were very few of the human family in Jesus' day capable of being used as God's comforting angels to our Lord. Mary of Bethany was one of these, who, just prior to the Master's crucifixion, anointed his feet with a fragrant, costly perfume, and wiped them with her hair. She was one who gave Him consolation when His mind was agitated with the thought that five days thence He would be crucified. He realized that none of the people understood, that none of them were able to enter into His feelings. But Mary's service was very precious to the Lord—very encouraging to Him.—Z. '15:374.

◆

Not only are we to have our **minds renewed**, but our bodies are to be brought into **subjection** to the **new mind**, our **new will**. Because our bodies are earthly and imperfect through the fall, we can never hope to bring them into **complete** subserviency to the new mind. There will always be more or less of conflict. But we are to deaden, to treat as though they were nothing, these desires and impulses of the depraved flesh. Thus we make progress, being transformed day by day into the image and likeness of our God and of His dear Son.—Z. '15:147.

◆

We are to distinguish between prayer, petitions to God, and adoration. **Any one** may worship God, may bow down and adore Him. But in the matter of prayer there is a **limitation**. Only certain persons may pray to the Lord with any assurance of being heard. And these are they who have become His people by a definite covenant. Any who have come into such covenant relationship with God have the privilege of prayer. This was true of the Jews under the Law Covenant arrangement; and it is true of us who have made a Covenant of Sacrifice with the Lord through Jesus Christ.—Z. '15:183.

◆

The fiery furnace was ready. The courage of the three Hebrews stands out on the pages of history as **sublime**. The king reminded them that none of the gods had been able to deliver any people out of his hand; their own city, Jerusalem, had been overthrown. They could hope for no succor, no rescue from the death that was before them if they persisted in defying the king of the whole earth. Their answer was that their God, Jehovah, they were sure was quite able to deliver them from the fiery furnace, or from anything He might choose, and would do so. But if **not**—if He did not deliver them—and if they were certain of it in advance—nevertheless, they would be His faithful servants and worship Him alone. How sublime their faith and their courage! Such faith and such courage we may be sure is pleasing to the Lord. We must not expect that in every case God will thus deliver those who trust in Him; rather, as these Hebrews intimated, we are not able to know the wise plans of our God, nor what may be His will respecting what little remains of our lives. But of His power and love we are confident. We can trust Him where we cannot trace Him.—Z. '11:347.

◆

We are never safe from being side-tracked unless we go often to the Throne of Grace; we cannot be filled unless we keep very close to the great Fountain from which our infilling comes. We must daily carry our earthen pitcher to this Heavenly Fountain to be replenished; for we are leaky vessels.—Z. '16:183.

◆

Any service done or attempted to be done in love, with the desire to do good to one of the Lord's people, we may be sure has the divine approval and blessing. Let us lose no opportunities of this kind; let us remember the Master's example; let us, like our Master, not merely assume humility or pretend it, but actually have that humility which will permit us to do kindness and services to all with whom we come in contact, and proportionately enjoy this privilege as we find the needy ones to be members of the Lord's body—the Church.—Z. '05:120.

◆

All the Lord's people are surely being taught the lesson enunciated by the Apostle—that we must learn to **rejoice** in tribulation, and to be patient because of our hope, which, as an anchor sure and steadfast, has entered within the vail. Quite to the contrary of what the world would suppose, our own experiences, and the testimony of many of the household of faith, assure us that no other people in all the world are so happy, so contented, so joyful in the house of their pilgrimage as are we. The poet has well said:

"Think what spirit dwells within thee,
Think what Father's smiles are thine,
Think how Jesus died to save thee—
Child of heaven, canst thou repine?"

If, momentarily, earth-born clouds and shadows do to some degree becloud our pathway, it is but for a brief season until we hear the voice of our Father and of our Savior assuring us of "Love divine, all love excelling."—Z. '07:371.

◆

The art of **giving himself** is one of the secrets of a happy Christian life. He first gives his will to the Lord, then his time, his energy, his talents, to the service of the Lord and for the Lord's people. He has pleasure in the giving and a blessing, whether others know and appreciate it or not; and by and by his time for receiving will come,—the Lord's time for giving. The Lord will give unto such eternal life, eternal glory and association with himself in his Kingdom.—Z. '97 : 281.

◆

"The Lord knoweth them that are his:" and our God is "the same yesterday, today and forever!" He still knows his own: he still superintends his work: he still sends through appropriate agents and at the proper season just such helps as are needful to his people.—Z. '97 : 219.

◆

It is the sympathetic ones who are most successful in helping the various members of the body of Christ out of the difficulties, besetments and defilements incident to the following of the Lord in this present time. Oh, let us study and strive and pray that we may be very successful in obeying the Master's words, "Ye also ought to wash one another's feet."

It will also be a great help and comfort to the fellow members of the body, if in connection with these efforts to help one another in the cleansing of our ways, by taking heed unto the Word of the Lord, we will have with us also some of the precious ointment of sympathetic and, as far as possible, commendatory and encouraging words, and helpful assistance: for all the members of the feet class who are seeking to walk worthy of the Lord need the ointment of sympathy and encouragement, as offsets to the trials, difficulties and persecutions incident to the "narrow way," coming to them from the great Adversary and his blinded servants.—Z. '97 : 243.

◆

What are our joys which no man taketh from us? and which persecution and affliction and trouble can only deepen and widen and make more sweet? What joy is this? This joy is a foretaste of the blessings to come, an earnest of our inheritance. It is inspired by confidence in him on whom we have believed: confidence that he is both able and willing to perfect the work which he has begun and which we desire shall be perfected in his own best way: confidence that so long as we are firmly holding to his gracious promises with the arms of our faith, he will not permit us to be separated from him. Who shall separate us from the love of God in Christ? Shall tribulation and persecution? Our confidence is that "no one is able to pluck us out of the Father's hand," and that "the Father himself loveth" us, and will not turn us away so long as we desire to abide obediently in his love. Yea, we are confident that all things are working together for good to those who love God: confident that he who is for us is more powerful than all who can be against us. Such confidence is sure to bring joy beyond the world's comprehension, and a peace of God that passeth all understanding, which keeps the heart.—Z. '97 : 305, 306.

◆

As Elijah did the smiting, so all those who belong to the Elijah class will have (had) a share in it. Z. '16 : 335.

◆

The Ancient Worthies cannot get their blessing before we get ours. The Bride must be glorified before any of the faithful of the past can come in and get their blessing. Then forthwith the Kingdom will be established. And then Abraham, Isaac and Jacob and all the other Worthies will be the first children of Christ. Instead of being the **fathers,** they will be the **children,** and He will make them princes, rulers, in all the earth. (Psalm 45:16.) Being resurrected perfect men, they will be the perfect images of God. **In each one of these Worthies God will be manifest in the flesh.** They will be princes at that time and rule the earth, under Christ's Kingdom.—Z. '15 : 310.

◆

IN THE PRESENCE OF THE KING

If we could always feel each little thing
We do, each hour we spend
Within the presence of the King,
What dignity 'twould lend!

If we could realize our every thought
Is known to him, our King,
With how great carefulness would it be fraught,
And what a blessing bring!

If, when some sharp word leaves a cruel sting
Our faith could know and feel
'Twas heard within the presence of the King,
How soon the wound would heal!

Oh, when the song of life seems hard to sing,
And darker grows the way,
Draw nearer to the presence of the King,
And night shall turn to day!—Z. '07 : 229.

◆

The sins and weaknesses which we fail to fight against will be sure eventually to fight against us and to injure us.—Z. '07 : 282.

◆

May the love of God be more and more shed abroad in our hearts, and our consciences be always tender, and may we ever abstain from the appearance of evil. May we be enabled at all times to be circumspect in our conversation, and to scrutinize our thoughts and words and doings, to the intent that we may ever be ready and able to serve our Heavenly Father and His dear flock, the "Feet" members of the Body of Christ!

Grudge no loving word, my brother,
As along through life you go,
To the ones who journey with you;
If you love them, tell them so.—Z. '12 : 354.

◆

Not only shall we see our Heavenly Father and our Heavenly Lord, and be ushered into the Assembly of the Church of the First-borns, but we shall be ushered into the presence of an innumerable company of angels. These are the angels who encamp round about those that fear the Lord and deliver them. (Psa. 34 : 7.) They are sent to be ministers for those who shall be heirs of salvation. (Heb. 1:14.) They have been with us here overseeing our interests; and it will be part of our joy on the spirit plane to make their acquaintance.—Z. '11:157.

Old Corn Gems

NUMBER SIXTY-EIGHT

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The Secret Place

Wondrous the thought—that the Father
  Knows of our every care;
Feels for us when the shadow
  Lurks where the sky was fair:
Knows of the pent-up sorrow,
  Feels for the eyes that weep;
Tells of a brighter Morrow
  Where shadows never creep!

Precious to know the Good Shepherd
  Tenderly guides His sheep
Over the stony places:
  Cares when the path is steep:
Watches for greenest pastures,
  Tends them with loving skill;
Guards them from fright and danger,
  Leads them by Waters still!

Joyous the thought—that the angels,
  Guardians are, to keep:
Bearing in hands so tender
  Weary and wounded Feet
Daily are gaining access
  To the dear Father's face;
Hourly are seeking succor
  For those who crave His grace!

Blessed to feel we are dwelling
  Safe in the Secret Place:
Under Jehovah's shadow,
  Trusting till we can trace:
Knowing no ill can harm us,
  Knowing His Arm of Love
Safely will shield, till He calls us
  Unto His Home above!—Z. '15:340.

ANNOUNCEMENT

A local convention will be held at Richfield, Wis., Friday, Saturday and Sunday, November 4th, 5th and 6th, 1921, at the home of Sr. Hoelz. Meals and rooms will be provided by the Richfield Ecclesia. Bros. Palmer and Zinck will serve. All Standfast Bible Students will be made welcome. For further information write to the Secretary, Bro. Fred. Stark, R. 1, Richfield, Wis.

St. Paul was an outspoken, uncompromising teacher. When he **knew** that he had the Truth, he spoke it with confidence, and boldly declared that everything contrary to it is **false doctrine**.—Z. 12: 194.

◆

The most reasonable thing for any of us to do would be to give ourselves wholly to the Lord, just as soon as we realize our imperfection and the Lord's sufficiency. We should be glad to have Him as our Care-taker, regardless of what reward He would give. We should be sure that so great and so generous a King as God would give good gifts to all who are His. In other words, after the Little Flock is completed, the Lord will be glad to bless in some other manner others who have the spirit of obedience and sacrifice.—Z. '15:204.

◆

We are not to infer that those glorious characters mentioned in the Scriptures who lived before Christ's time were ignoble or less faithful than the Gospel Church, but merely that God promised them the earthly perfection, while He has promised the Bride of Christ the heavenly perfection.—Z. '12:166.

◆

The restoration of life to the dead is to be one of the great features of the New Dispensation—Messiah's Kingdom. And this power will be exercised doubtless through the "princes" of that time, typified, we believe, by Elisha. Those most to be favored will be those who will most thoroughly appreciate and best receive the "princes," represented by Elisha, even as the parents of the child whom Elisha raised from the dead had made gracious provision for the prophet's comfort.—Z. '11:43.

◆

God's power surrounds all of His consecrated people in an unlimited measure. These powers are exercised by spirit beings, entirely invisible to men. The important thing is to get the right thought—that under all conditions Omnipotent Power stands behind and completely surrounds those who are His. Nothing can befall this special class except in accord with the Divine program. Whatever may occur in their experience will be of Divine foreknowledge and permission; hence the promise to this class is that all things shall work together for their good.—Rom. 8:28; Z. '15:302.

◆

Our faith does not consist merely in believing in God's personality, God's righteousness. We fully believe in the personality of God, in the power of God. Nevertheless we need to exercise faith in the Divine providence in **our own case**.—Z. '12:211.

◆

The stronger we become in Christian character the more intense will become our love for the good, the pure and the true; and the more intense will be our opposition to the untrue, the impure, the sinful. The more we learn of the beautiful harmonies of this heavenly grace of love, and the more they become the melodies of our own hearts, the more distressing and repugnant and abhorrent will sin and selfishness, "the spirit of the world," be to us; just as discords in music grate upon our ears in proportion to our knowledge and appreciation of musical harmonies.—Z. '11:382.

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OLD CORN GEMS

NUMBER SIXTY-EIGHT

"And they did eat of the OLD CORN of the land on the morrow after the Passover . . . and the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the OLD CORN of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year." Joshua 5:11-12.

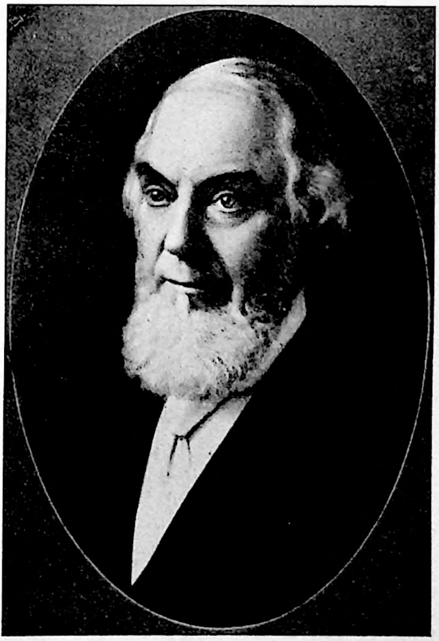
A SAFE RULE

"WHERE A BROTHER GIVES AN INTERPRETATION OF A SCRIPTURE WHICH DIFFERS FROM THAT GIVEN BY BROTHER RUSSELL, AND BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION SEEMS REASONABLE AND IN HARMONY WITH THE PLAN OF GOD, THEN WE BELIEVE IT A SAFE RULE TO FOLLOW BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION, FOR THE REASON THAT HE IS THE SERVANT OF THE CHURCH, SO CONSTITUTED BY THE LORD FOR THE LAODICEAN PERIOD; AND THEREFORE WE SHOULD EXPECT THE LORD TO TEACH US THROUGH HIM. WHERE THERE ARISES A DOUBT IN THE MIND AS TO WHICH INTERPRETATION IS CORRECT, THEN IT IS ALWAYS SAFER TO RESOLVE THAT DOUBT IN FAVOR OF BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION. WE BELIEVE SUCH TO BE IN HARMONY WITH THE LORD'S WILL." Z. '18:51.

A MAN HAS GONE FROM US, LEAVING NONE IN HIS PLACE,
YET HIS MESSAGE OF TRUTH MEN CAN NEVER EFFACE.

Z. '16:391.

THE
WISE AND
FAITHFUL
SERVANT
Matt. 24-45



THE
STEWARD
OF THE
PENNY
Matt. 20-8

BROTHER RUSSELL

PASSED FROM THIS LIFE FIVE YEARS AGO.—OCTOBER 31st, 1916

Christlikeness the Evidence of Sonship

"He that saith he abideth in Him ought himself also so to walk even as He walked."—1 John 2:6.

To ABIDE in Christ implies that one has first come into Him. This gives us the thought of a Body. The Scriptures everywhere represent the Church as being this Body, with Jesus as the Head. "God gave Him to be Head over the Church, which is His Body." During the Gospel Age an invitation has been given to certain persons to be of this Body of Christ. There is only one door by which these may come into the Body. It is the door of sacrifice, baptism into Christ's death. We are accepted only by giving up our own will, and taking instead the will of God. We pledge ourselves to walk in Jesus' steps, to become His followers, His disciples. We are buried with Him and rise to walk in newness of life.—Romans 6:4.

But it is not sufficient that we take these steps, not sufficient that we have received the Holy Spirit, and have been accepted of the Father. We should be sure that we continue to abide in Christ. Let us ask ourselves, Are we having the experiences common to all who are associated with Jesus? One of the ways to be sure that we are abiding in Him is to realize that we still love Him. Another is to know that we are still in harmony with God's Word. A third way is that we have no will but the Lord's will. Still another is to have His peace in our hearts and lives as the ruling and controlling influence.

Profession Alone Insufficient

Many have made a profession of being members of the Body of Christ who do not give evidence of being His. Our text says that any one who professes to be in Christ ought so to walk even as the Master walked. And how did the Master walk? He lived daily in harmony with the will of the Heavenly Father. He was fully submissive to the Father's will. And this meant sacrifice unto death—the cruel death of the cross.

Whoever has our Lord's spirit, and is controlled by the same will, is a member of the Body of Christ, and will seek to walk after this fashion, to do the will of God in all things. This will mean a walk of holiness, of full devotion to God, and of opposition to sin. Whoever is consecrated to God is opposed to every sinful thing; for God and sin are in antagonism. God stands for His own righteousness, and sin is a violation of that righteousness.. (1 John 3:4.) Whoever walks as Jesus walked is in harmony with the Divine Word and will. We are not to trust to our impressions, our own conceptions of what is right and advantageous, as many others do: but the Word of the Lord is to abide in us, and to govern our lives. Jesus said, "I came not to do Mine own will, but the will of Him that sent Me"—"everything written in the Book." And so it is to be with us. We must abide in Him, walk in Him, and be willing to do "everything written in the Book"—not merely forcing ourselves to it, saying, I will take this course; but saying, "I delight to do Thy will, O my God; Thy law is written in my heart."—Psa. 40:7, 8.

Proofs of Sonship

All who have accepted Christ claim, in a general way at least, to be sons of God, that Christ is their Elder Brother, and that they belong to this great family that God is selecting from the sons of men. They consider themselves heirs with Christ to the great Kingdom to come. But not all who claim to be sons of God are such. A great many are making this claim. Statistics tell us that there are four hundred millions of professed Christians; but we cannot think that many of these four hundred millions are sons of God. The Apostle Paul calls our attention to the fact that since we cannot read the hearts we must go by the professions which others make by mouth and by conduct. But professions of the mouth are not to be taken as final. We know that those who are sons of God will be led by His Spirit. "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God."

But what is the Spirit of God? Primarily it is the spirit of Truth, the spirit of holiness, the spirit of justice, the spirit of love. And as many as are God's children, begotten of His Holy Spirit, will make some manifestation of their harmony with this general Spirit of God. If they are, therefore, walking in unrighteousness, making no endeavor to stem the tendencies of sin in themselves, if they prefer error rather than Truth, their fruits condemn them; for God stands for Truth, and was exemplified in our Lord Jesus.

Whoever, therefore, has the Spirit of God, is willing to sacrifice himself that he may serve the Truth. He loves the Truth, and will manifest this fact by the spirit of love and zeal. Satan is the personification of sin, envy, hatred, malice, strife. Righteousness, love, joy, peace, are fruits of the Holy Spirit. Wherever we see the works of the Devil manifested we have reason to question that such a one is a child of God. The spirit of envy, the spirit of hatred, the spirit of malice, the spirit of opposition to the Truth, the spirit of unrighteousness—these are to be repudiated and overcome by all who would be sons of God.

Yet despite one's best efforts, he might still find in his flesh tendencies to sin which would give him a great deal of trouble. He may take courage from the assurances of the Scriptures that, the Lord looketh on the heart. Likewise in regard to others, we should judge according to the endeavor, the intention. Wherever the Spirit of God is, there is the spirit of love. And this spirit will make one wish to make reparation, if he has done wrong or been in error. To do so shows that it was not his spirit, his will to do wrong, but that he was merely entrapped for a time. But one who continues to do according to his natural tendencies, with no evidence of going in the right direction and of serving the Truth, has reason to doubt that he is a child of God.

How We Can Walk as He Walked

The Apostle's thought seems to be that those who profess to be, the Lord's followers, profess to be Christians, should see to it that their walk in life is in harmony with their profession. The word **disciple** signifies one who follows—as a pupil follows his teacher. We recognize Christ as our Redeemer and also as our Pattern, our Instructor, in the glorious things which the Father has invited us to share with our Savior. If, therefore, we say that we are in Him, this profession should be borne out by our walk in life. We should walk as He walked.

But we are not perfect—how can this be done? The answer is that we "are not in the **flesh,** but in the **spirit.**" God does not look upon our imperfect flesh. As New Creatures we are not fleshly beings, but spiritual. The Apostle is in our text speaking of that walk that the Master had after He made His consecration. He walked in this way three and a half years. It was a walk, not according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit. And so with us. We are walking, not according to the flesh, but according to the New Creature. We reckon ourselves dead according to the flesh, and the Lord so reckons us. If, then, we are dead to the flesh, we are not to walk according to the desires of the flesh.

We are to walk as our Lord walked, in our general deportment. We are to love everything that is good and to avoid everything that is evil. We are to walk as nearly as possible in the footsteps of our Lord and Exemplar. We cannot in an imperfect body walk up to all the perfection of Jesus, who was perfect in His flesh as well as in His spirit. But we are to walk as He walked—in the same path, in the same direction, toward the same glorious goal toward which He walked. And so doing, faithful day by day, we shall by His grace attain the same exceeding great reward.—Z. '14:126, 127.

The New Creature's Responsibility to Divine Law

THE NEW CREATURE is represented by the **will,** the **mind;** but there can be no New Creature without a body. God does not give the New Creature its own body in the present life, but permits it to practise on the old body. And according to the New Creature's faithfulness in the old body will be its reward—either as a member of the Little Flock or of the Great Company or—for unfaithfulness, its punishment, Second Death.

The New Creature owns the mortal body, possesses that body. The body is not the New Creature's body except in a possessive sense. If one were living in a cabin temporarily while his house is being built, and someone else were to ask, "Is that your house?" he would say, "No; I am staying here merely until my house is built." So the New Creature occupies the old body. That body is dead because it has been devoted to God in connection with the Sin-offering.—Col. 3:3; Gal. 2:20.

The Lord knoweth our frame. He knows that we are all fallen, imperfect—mentally, morally, physically. His message to the New Creature is, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." (Matt. 5:48.) This means perfection of will, of intent, of endeavor. But God knows that we have this treasure of the new will in a mortal body, which is imperfect. Through Christ He has made provision that every imperfection of our flesh may be forgiven on condition that we come to Him for that forgiveness in the name of our Advocate, Jesus. This arrangement is to our advantage, for it leads us to watch the more carefully in respect to our trespasses and to note the more carefully that they cannot be forgiven except through the merit of our Redeemer.

Three Blessings Resulting From Faithful Obedience

The experience of the New Creature in coming to the Throne of Grace for help is, therefore, educational. It will strive the more diligently, the more earnestly, the more perseveringly, to live according to the will of God, not only in mind, but also in body. The result of faithfully following this course of daily scrutinizing our thoughts and words and doings must be the strengthening, the fortifying of the New Creature against the wiles of the world, the flesh and the Adversary.

Additionally, this course must mean not only a higher and nobler earthly life, even though still imperfect, but a great sympathy for others of the human family and for the Church, who similarly strive against the weaknesses of heredity in the flesh, and also a general enlightenment of the heart sympathetically toward the members of the human family—born in sin, "shapen in iniquity." It must mean thus much of preparation for the future Kingdom—for helping poor humanity up out of the degradation of sin and death.

Causes of Spiritual Decline

Although the New Creature cannot consent to sin, cannot sin wilfully, cannot sin with deliberation, and still be a holy mind, it can become slack, careless, inattentive, overcharged with the cares of this life—not sufficiently loyal and alert to fight against the Great Enemy. In this condition it may become more or less stupefied, while the will of the flesh may gain the ascendancy in some particular. The flesh has its cravings, its demands; and it has a plausible way of urging what it thinks to be its rights and privileges. Sometimes the flesh is very persistent along these lines.

If the New Creature become overcharged, become weak through a **failure to eat** the strengthening food which the Father has provided, it may be almost helpless for a time, until at last it becomes non-resistant to sin. To whatever extent the New Creature is to blame for this condition, it will receive stripes, not merely as a matter of justice, but also as a matter of correction, for if it were not corrected it might go on to greater carelessness as to its responsibilities.

We all need to be disciplined in order that we may stand firm for the principles of righteousness. To whatever extent the New Creature fails to resist the flesh, there will be stripes, punishment of some kind, retribution. But even when those punishments come, there will be also manifestations of the Lord's favor.

The experiences of the Prophet David were not altogether like those of the saints, for he was on a different plane from us. But we may apply the general principles deduced from his experiences. David sinned and the Lord allowed certain chastisements to come upon him. David was contrite and asked forgiveness for those sins. Although he had the light of the Lord's favor, yet the Lord declared that he must be punished for doing those things which he knew were wrong, even though all the while his heart was set on the Lord. The after experiences of the man proved his contrition. He committed sin; he repented; he was forgiven; he was restored to the Lord's favor. Yet in due time he received chastisements for those very sins; and when he received those chastisements, he recognized that they were a just recompense of punishment upon him.

Stages in the Development of Wilful Sin

Inattention or carelessness on the part of the New Creature does not necessarily mean the Second Death, unless that carelessness went to the extent of intelligent choice of sin—**wilful** sin. The wilful sinner cuts himself off entirely from Divine favor and lapses into the condition of condemnation to death, out of which he had been lifted. Of this the Apostle speaks, saying, "We are not of those who draw back unto perdition," destruction—Second Death. Furthermore, it should be noted that none ever steps suddenly from loyalty to disloyalty to God and to righteousness.

Wilful sin coming upon the New Creature destroys him so gradually that he seems not to be conscious of its development at the time. First, the wish, the desire, the pride or the ambition develops; he is not submissive to the Divine will. Later on, an attempt is made to acquire the gratification of the pride of life, the lust of the eye and of the flesh and a corresponding neglect of the heavenly things —of the hope set before us in the Scriptures and of the Covenant of sacrifice which we have made.

A later development of this wrong spirit by and by finds opportunity, under one pretext or another, to put the person into opposition to the Lord, to the truth and to the brethren. He thus gradually passes from being a soldier under the banner of Christ to becoming a co-laborer with the Adversary **in opposing the things of God.**

As the Apostle says, "Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!" (James 3:5.) Behold what a great destruction of all the work of grace may be accomplished speedily by a little pride or fond desire or self-gratification!—not that the little beginnings mean the Second Death, but that they will surely lead on toward it unless the individual be recovered. St. James emphasized this thought, saying, "When lust [desire] has conceived, it bringeth forth Sin; and Sin when it is finished [completed] bringeth forth Death."—James 1:15.

Three Methods of Admonition Used by the Lord

Meantime, while one of the Lord's sheep would be thus straying, would the Great Shepherd be inattentive and allow him to wander without warning? **Surely not!** Through some Divine providence, such as sickness or the coming to the attention of some message from God's Word, directly or indirectly, or through faithful testimony and witness of the brethren, the Lord will speak to all such straying sheep, pointing out to them the danger of the path they are taking. If they heed well, they shall be recovered fully, and ultimately attain to the highest state as overcomers. But the Lord will not **coerce.**

In the beginning the Lord appealed to our **wills,** and He continues to do so. The Lord will not use force in the selection of the present time; for He seeketh only such to serve Him as worship Him in spirit and in truth. The same **will** which He accepted and which brought us such great blessing can reject God's favors—can receive the grace of God in vain and gradually draw back out of fellowship with the Lord and with the spirit of the Covenant and toward the Second Death.

If the admonitions of the Lord's providences, including the counsel of the brethren, etc., fail, and if there be a measure of ignorance connected with the perverse course, the Lord may give severe chastisements to awaken thoroughly such a person, that the spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus, through those chastisements. (1 Cor. 5:5.) Many such, the Scriptures assure us, will come up out of great tribulation, washing their robes and making them white in the blood of the Lamb. (Rev. 7:14.) But while they may attain to a good position on the spirit plane, they have lost the great, preeminent prize of joint-heirship with the Lord in the Messianic Kingdom, unto which they were called.

Allowance Made for Immaturity of Character

It seems to be a correct principle, however, that a person begotten of the Holy Spirit, who had not yet developed strength of character sufficient to qualify him to be a child of God on the heavenly plane, would not have judgment passed upon him until he had enjoyed the opportunity of coming to a knowledge of Present Truth and of demonstrating his loyalty.

This thought seems to be borne out by the Apostle in Hebrews 6:4-6. There, where he says in substance, If those who have tasted of the good Word of God and been made partakers of the Holy Spirit, shall fall away, it will be impossible to renew them, he implies that those who have not had this opportunity for development are not responsible to such an extent and would not be liable to the Second Death. If a babe had done something worthy of stripes, he would be treated according to his infancy. The Apostle Peter says, "As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the Word, that ye may **grow** thereby."—1 Peter 2:2.

These texts seem to suggest a process of development. If one made his consecration today, he would not be counted worthy of the Kingdom today; for only through trials and tribulations shall he become worthy. A certain period of probation would be granted to him, an opportunity to make good his covenant of sacrifice. Then if he failed to make good that covenant of sacrifice, he would be responsible in one of the two ways, as we have seen; either he would receive chastisements of the Lord which would bring him to a realization of his privileges, or if wholly unworthy of God, he would go into the Second Death. Anyone becoming a Christian will have long enough time in which to make his calling and election sure, if he so run in the race as to obtain.

Self-Imposed Discipline Recommended

Sometimes God's people, appreciating their own weaknesses, the blemishes of their flesh, properly feel themselves unworthy of the glorious things which God has in reservation for the Elect. It is their duty to do the best in their power, but not to attempt to judge, to decide their own cases. There is One that judgeth them, even God. Whatever the sin, whatever the circumstances, it should be taken promptly to the Throne of Heavenly Grace in the name of Jesus, to obtain the mercy of God provided thus, and to find increasing help for future times of need.

We must not become discouraged and lose faith and hope, even though obliged to come to that Throne, repentantly, seventy times seven times. To whatever extent, however, the sin be repeated as the result of earthly weakness of heredity, to that extent there is forgiveness, in the Divine arrangement. But to whatever extent the sin contained a measure of wilfulness, or to whatever extent we failed to use our knowledge and ability to resist it, to that extent the New Creature will be held responsible, and will have certain chastisements imposed. Happy are those people who seek to punish themselves by some discipline, such as fasting. The Apostle says, "If we would judge ourselves, we should not be judged" [chastened of the Lord].—1 Cor. 11:31, 32.

We should all keep in memory, however, the fact that God expects of us a demonstration of loyalty to Him and to the principles of Truth and Righteousness—in an overcoming degree. It will not do simply to stand still from week to week and from year to year and to say, "These are my weaknesses and I take them to Jesus." Overcoming is the gaining of some victory by the New Creature over besetting weaknesses as well as over trespasses. Only such as **strive** will be **crowned** and acknowledged of the Lord as overcomers. And their overcoming will be, not of themselves, but of God's grace and the assistance of the Great Advocate.—1 John 5:4; Z. '12:291-293.

The Tongue a Power for Good or Evil

James 3:1-12.

Golden Text:—"Whoso keepeth his mouth and his tongue, keepeth his soul from troubles."—Prov. 21:23.

OUR lesson is generally acknowledged to be one of the most profound dissertations known in the world on the power of speech. St. James was evidently a very practical man. His remarks respecting the value of words as attestations of faith show this. Today's lesson takes up the practical thought and applies it to the tongue in general, and especially to the power of speech in those recognized as Elders or Teachers in the Church. Thus our lesson opens with the exhortation, "Be not many of you teachers, my brethren, knowing that we (who are teachers) shall receive the heavier judgment," because in many things we all stumble. The thought is that whoever attempts to be a teacher, a "rabbi," takes a position which exposes him to more criticism than falls upon the ordinary member of the Ecclesia. And if he errs, he will be subjected to much more severe criticism and rebuke than if he made the same error in his own private judgment. More than this, from the Lord's standpoint, he assumes a great responsibility in becoming an ambassador of the Gospel and mouthpiece of the Lord. If faithfulness and care would bring him a great blessing and reward, unfaithfulness or carelessness would bring correspondingly heavy condemnation.

These words of the Apostle, in conjunction with our Lord's suggestion that if bidden to a feast we take not a high seat, but a low one, and that we seek not the title "rabbi," but be humble, as "little children"—these suggestions from so high authority in the Church, combined with St. Paul's exhortation, "Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God that he may exalt you in due time," should properly cause us to fear the responsibility of a teacher's position in the Church. If seemingly in the Lord's Providence we occupy such a position it should be held very humbly and with great fearfulness and continual watching and praying lest we enter into temptation and ensnare ourselves and others in error.

"Pride Goeth Before a Fall"

Of course, there is a reason for this danger. It lies in ambition, which sometimes takes the direction of pride and sometimes the love of praise. The first of these, pride, is always reprehensible, never excusable, for surely no member of our race has any reasonable, just ground for pride, even though in comparison with the remainder of the race he might be forced to the conclusion that he was less fallen than many. The second danger to ambition, namely, **love of approbation** of others, is proper enough if rightly directed—Godward—but dangerous in proportion as it seeks human approbation, because those about us, likewise imperfect, might often approve and applaud things which our Lord would disapprove and reprobate. Hence, the only ambition allowable would be the desire to please God and to have his approval and ultimately his "Well done."

Of course, this would incidentally mean a desire and expectation of having the approval of such of the Lord's brethren as have the spirit of the Lord—"The mind of Christ." It might properly also include an appreciation of the love and esteem of all men. But these must not become any part of our ambition, nor must we expect that mankind in general would be so impulsed by righteousness and

Truth and the spirit of these that they would approve and applaud the things most pleasing to the Lord. On the contrary, we must remember that if any man love the world and its approval and applause, the love of the Father is not in him. If he gets the approval of the world in general he should remember the Lord's words, "Woe unto you when all men speak well of you." It should be a sign to him that in an important sense and degree he was out of harmony with the Lord and his message—otherwise the world would hate him, as it did Christ, and cry out, "Crucify him."

"One Is Your Teacher, Even Christ"

St. James is not warning us against service, nor seeking to hinder us from all good works one for the other, as members of the Body of Christ. His caution is against our attempting to be (school) masters or teachers. There is but the one Teacher or Schoolmaster for the entire Church of Christ for all this age. He is the "Head of the Church, which is his Body"—the Director, Supervisor, Caretaker, Instructor of the "members."

True, the Apostle does intimate that the Lord "Hath set the various members in the Body as it hath pleased Him." He intimates that the qualities of eye and ear and tongue are head qualities in comparison with the hand, the foot, etc., which are body qualities. Our absent Lord or Head promised to be with every little gathering of his people. "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the age," and thus with them he is pleased to exercise in some manner and through some agency the Chairmanship of such a meeting and to be the Teacher. But he will not force his Headship upon us. He waits to serve, to instruct, to guide so many as are in the right attitude of heart, desirous of knowing his will and doing it. Having instructed his people respecting his will, he expects them to follow his instructions, if they would have the blessing he is pleased to confer. If, therefore, when assembled in his name they follow the directions of his Word, hearken to his voice in the Scriptures and watch for the leadings of his Spirit, and approve it in each other where found, his blessing will be proportionate.

Thus a responsibility is upon each little group to approve as its leader none but the consecrated. No goat must be chosen as a leader of the sheep, nor any sheep whose outward conduct does not give evidence of his sincerity of heart and desire to walk in the footsteps of the Master. Pride, and self-seeking ambition to be a lord over the flock, should not be tolerated, because they would be injurious, not only to the Ecclesia of believers, but also to the heady ones seeking to lead them. Nevertheless, where need to be restrained from taking the highest seats in the spiritual feast presents itself, the restraint should be exercised in a kindly, loving manner, with the remembrance that some have greater trials and temptations along these lines than have others, and, as the Apostle says, "Remembering thyself, lest thou also be tempted."

St. James declares, "In many things we all stumble." He does not mean that we all fall into sin or grievous error, but he does mean that, so long as we are in the flesh and the Spirit of the Lord and his message are delivered through our imperfect powers, no one is infallible. Hence, those who do not aspire to leadership in the meetings of the "saints" should not be hypercritical of the brethren who seem to manifest humility of heart, and who endeavor to serve them, breaking to them the bread of life. They should be appreciated and loved for their work's sake, even if their every utterance cannot be accepted unqualifiedly. These sentiments attach not only to the oral teacher, but also to the printed page, by which another may be represented in the meeting.

"The Same Is a Perfect Man"

We are not to understand the Apostle to mean that any man is actually perfect, nor to mean that ability to bridle the tongue would indicate that perfection had been reached in every other channel of his life. His thought manifestly is that the tongue is the most difficult member of the human body to control and that whoever could succeed in gaining such a control of that member as would preclude his ever stumbling in speech would prove his ability to control every avenue of his nature. Of course, in this respect, as in every respect, there is no man perfect. "There is none righteous (perfect), no, not one." The only perfect one since Adam's fall was he who came down from above, and who is above or superior to all, because in him was no sin, no hereditary taint, no blemish.

"Able also to bridle the whole body," gives us the thought of the restraint necessary to us in all of the affairs of life. "Let your moderation be known unto all men"—your self-restraint, the bridling of your entire body. The work of grace which the Lord proposes and admonishes is very thorough and leaves little time to be "killed" in foolish talking or jesting or games or frivolities or novel-reading. Some of the Lord's dear people have not gotten far enough developed to appreciate this—have not reached the quickened stage of activity in the service of righteousness and in the warfare against sin and selfishness in their own flesh.

Bridling Horses an Illustration

St. James, to illustrate the power of the mind, the will, in the control of the body, and especially in control of the tongue, illustrates the matter by the bridling of a horse. The fiery steed, much stronger than a man, can be "broken" or tamed, bridled and made to do the will of the driver. But not so the tongue. It is most unruly. The new will takes hold with determination that the tongue shall go in the proper direction only, speaking forth words of justice and love, yet ere long the tongue runs away, breaks its bonds. Here we have a runaway accident with damage to some—perhaps to many. Similarly with ships; a rudder is so placed as to turn the ship about in the face of the most severe gales—not only little ships, but great ships are thus turned about by very small helms, which answer perfectly to the steering apparatus of the helmsman. But the tongue, which should be tractable to the guidance of the New Creature and its most useful servant, is, on the contrary, perverse, uncontrollable. The tongue, therefore, one of the least of our members, is one of the most important of them. It can accomplish great things, either for good or for evil, just as the little fire of a match might be so used as to set on fire a forest.

"The Tongue Is a Fire,

A world of iniquity among our members. It defileth the whole body and setteth on fire the course (wheel) of nature; and it is set on fire of Gehenna." (Jas. 3:6.) Here we have a series of word pictures. The tongue is a world of iniquity in the sense that every iniquity in the world can be introduced descriptively by the tongue. Of course, the organ itself is never meant, but speech, which the tongue represents. By the tongue, by our speech, oral or written, every form of evil may find its highest power. The tongue can paint pictures more quickly and more vividly than any painter's brush. Since the world about us is full of iniquity expressed in a thousand forms it is within the range of the powers of the tongue to picture these and, by the printing press, to distribute them to thousands of millions. It is indeed a whole world of iniquity, if improperly used. Alas! that even amongst Christians this is frequently the case. Careless words, insinuations, hints, are dropped into the minds of neighbors or friends and, because these are already predisposed to evil-thinking, evil-surmising, etc., these words are like lighted matches dropped in a hayloft—apt to start a conflagration which may do incalculable injury to the neighbor and from him the sparks may fly far and near, working moral and spiritual havoc.

The course of nature, more literally the wheel of life, or the human course from the cradle to the tomb, may easily be set on fire at any time. There are thousands of opportunities. The tongue is the match. Possibly St. James had specially in mind the course of the New Creature and its dangers. What if it should be set on fire and the entire spiritual prospect blighted, destroyed! That this is his thought seems to be implied by the words, "And it is set on fire of Gehenna." The world in general have evil tongues, reprobate minds; but being unregenerate the world's children are not in danger of Gehenna, the Second Death. But the Church, having received the grace of God in Christ, having been "begotten again," has staked its all upon the attainment of the spiritual blessing which the Lord has promised to the faithful. In the Church, therefore, the power of the tongue is much more potent than elsewhere. It may set on fire the course of the New Nature for some—a fire which may burn into the Second Death, and a fire which may not be confined to the one in whose heart it is ignited, but which may spread to others with similar effect, blighting the sweetness, the happiness, the Christ-likeness in the present life and destroying all future prospects. No wonder that our dear Redeemer admonished us to

"Take Heed What Ye Hear!"

While each should be on guard against communications and sparks that would be injurious, each one should also be on guard against allowing sparks to fall upon himself and to ignite in his heart. The fire-quenching apparatus, the water of Truth, should be continually at hand also, so that any spark alighting, its baneful influence may be quenched before irreparable injury be accomplished. "Keep your heart," then, would seem to imply the thought that we not only are not to give forth evil as injurious sparks to others, but that we are to watch, guard our hearts, that no evil either originate there or be received into them. Let us remember the adage that we cannot help the flying of crows over our heads, but we can keep them from nesting in our hair. We cannot rid the world, nor even the Church of evil-minded people, but we can avoid fellowshipping such, as the Apostle directed, saying, "Mark them which cause divisions amongst you and avoid them" (Rom. 16:17)—as you would avoid a pestilence or a vile odor or the sparks from a neighbor's burning barn.

Wild Beasts and Birds and Serpents

St. James had evidently learned well and deeply his lesson respecting the ferocity of the human tongue. He compares it, roughly speaking, with beasts, reptiles, fish and fowl. He declares that any of these may be considered as tameable. Man's superiority and power to conquer these has been demonstrated. But power to conquer the tongue and to make it tame and obedient and thoroughly reliable has never yet been demonstrated. "The tongue can no man tame." It is an unruly (restless, ceaseless) evil. And no serpent bite contains so dangerous, so violent poison. The serpent's bite may cause pain and physical death, but the tongue can do more, in that it can produce moral ravage, which will bite, devour and cause madness to others, and its influence extends to death eternal.

If we could but get a proper conception of the mighty potentialities of the tongue, it would make us almost afraid to speak a word, lest we should speak amiss. Such a fear would be very helpful to us, as gradually, then, a desire to speak the words of justice and love and soberness, the good tidings, should burst the restraint and find utterance, while the dread of the evil would still guard every expression. The result would be greater Godlikeness.

The Tongue Which Praises God, Curses Men

Here again we see that St. James is not speaking of the tongue from the worldly standpoint, but as a member of the Church of Christ to fellow-members. We all use our tongues in praising God, in confessing his grace and mercy and love, and in speaking forth his praises. This is proper. How can we do otherwise? But, alas, that it should be true that the same tongue which thus praises the Creator so often proves a curse, an injury, a world of iniquity to fellow-man! And especially to the fellow-members of the "household of faith!"—setting on fire the course of nature by slanders, evil-speaking and evil-surmising, hints, insinuations, etc. Oh, Lord, who is sufficient for these things! Truly, as St. Paul declares, "Our words are either a savor of life unto life or of death unto death."

"Sweet and Bitter, Blessing and Cursing"

"My brethren, these things ought not so to be." We must see to it that we learn this great lesson in the School of Christ, that out of the mouth which praises God there shall not come forth that which would be injurious to the brethren—or anyone. Look at nature! Did anyone ever know of a fountain sending forth at the same opening sweet water and bitter? No! As the same fountain could not yield salt water and fresh, so we cannot be copies of God's dear Son, nor fit for the Kingdom, so long as we have such a disposition. We must be conquerors. We must be overcomers. And the battle of each of us is within himself. We may indeed do all in our power for others and for the general cause, yet our victory and our title to the Lord's words, "Good and faithful servant," "More than conquerors," will not be for us except as our hearts are allowed to dominate our tongues and gain such a victory over impurity and lovelessness as will not tolerate them in any sense or degree.—Z. '09:124-126.

"The Vineyard"

Matthew 20:1-16.

Golden Text:—"Many that are first shall be last; and the last shall be first."—Matt. 19:30.

GRAPE CULTURE was one of the main industries of the days of the Great Teacher. The stony hillsides of Palestine were once terraced and extensively used as vineyards. On our recent visit we noted with particular interest the revival of this custom, as one of the evidences of the beginning of restitution in the Holy Land.—Acts 3:19-21.

The grapevine was honored of the Master, in that he used it in a parable to symbolize himself and the Church, saying, "I am the Vine, ye are the branches"; "My Father is the husbandman"; "Herein is my Father glorified, that ye bear much fruit"; "Every branch in me which beareth fruit he pruneth it that it may bring forth more fruit"; "Every branch in me that beareth not fruit he taketh away."

Our present study, The Parable of the Laborers, is in full accord with the foregoing, but shows the matter from a different standpoint. It shows how each one of the Lord's consecrated Church, each heir of the Messianic Kingdom shortly to be established, is privileged to be a co-laborer with his Lord and Master, and with the Heavenly Father in the vineyard work—**tending the vine,** looking out for the injurious pests, keeping the soil in good condition, assisting every way in the production of "much fruit" and of fine quality. Evidently many Christian people do not appreciate the privilege of being laborers in the Church of Christ—"building one another up in the most holy faith" until we all come to the full stature of a man in the Anointed One. . . .

The Scriptures declare that a deep knowledge of God, his Word and his purposes is attained only as a **gift of God,** bestowed only upon those who are in a humble, faithful, zealous attitude of mind—"To **you** it is **given to know** the mysteries of the Kingdom of God."

The things pertaining to God's Kingdom, in its future operation toward the world for a thousand years, will be openly manifested to every creature, shortly. But now it is appropriate, and is the Divine will, that these things should be known only to the Church, the consecrated, the spirit-begotten sons of God. Likewise there are important truths pertaining to the Kingdom class, the Church, which is being prepared to be the Bride of Christ and his joint-heir in the Kingdom. And these things are likewise intended to be comparatively secret—to be clearly and fully understood only by such as have made a covenant with the Lord by sacrifice. (Psalm 50:5.) "The Secret of the Lord is with them that reverence him, and he will show them his Covenant." (Psalm 25:14.) All such in close sympathy with the Divine purposes will be anxious to serve the Lord, the Truth and the brethren. And such from time to time will be specially used of the Lord for the assistance of his consecrated people in various ways.

Agreed for a Penny a Day

The word "penny" here is from the Greek **denarius,** a silver coin of about 17 cents value. But the value of money has so changed in recent years that today a laborer's wage in proportion to other things would be considerably more. The **denarius** was the Roman standard of that time, as the **lira** is the Italian standard, the **mark** the German standard, the **franc** the French standard, the shilling the English standard, and the dollar the American standard. It is worthy of note that in one of the fine old English cathedrals the records show that its excellent chisel work, superior to anything of today, cost "a penny a day and a bag of meal for each laborer." The parable of our lesson is evidently intended to teach that God will give all that he has agreed to all who labor—that he in generosity gives more than he has stipulated.

At the close of the day we read that those first hired murmured against their lord. We cannot suppose that any who would be counted worthy of a share in the Kingdom would murmur against the Giver of all Good. The rewarding is to be expected at the close of the harvest day and the murmuring may be expected there also. The "penny" or reward would thus seem to be something of the joys, blessings, honors and privileges of God's people in the present life, at the close of this age. Those who murmur that they do not receive a sufficiency of honor and distinction and of Divine acknowledgment will be thereby proving themselves unfit for the future service "beyond the veil," as members of the Church in glory. This would seem to point a warning to those of God's people who have been long in the Truth, and who have had great privileges of service, that if they murmur against the blessings and rewards coming to them, it will mean that they were laboring for the reward merely and not appreciating the privilege of being laborers with Christ and with the Father; it would imply that they had failed to enter into the spirit of the wonderful privileges granted them of serving the Lord, the Truth and the brethren. The right spirit, the proper interest in the Fathers' work and in the brethren should prompt all to rejoice with every new laborer and to be glad that all such should receive of the Lord's favors, blessings and enlightenment as fully, as freely, as themselves. Surely any who have not this spirit have not the Spirit of Christ on this subject at least.

The general lesson is that God is so just, so generous, so bountiful, in his dealings that all those who appreciate matters from his standpoint will rejoice in the blessings which overflow upon others. A failure to appreciate the Lord's generosity was one cause of stumbling to the Jews eighteen centuries ago—they were offended that the Gospel message should go out beyond them to the Gentiles. Similarly today some Christian people are stumbling over the fact that the Word of God shows that, whereas Divine blessings are now confined to the Church, "the elect," the servants and hand-maidens of the Gospel Age, yet the time is near at hand when "God will pour out his spirit upon all flesh," and when all the families of the earth shall be blessed.

All who have the privilege of bearing the labor and heat of the day in the Lord's service must be glad of the privilege, in order to be worthy of participation in the Kingdom. Thus some who seem to be first in their promptness to respond to the Lord's call for laborers may be amongst the last to receive special blessings of grace and Truth, and this may serve as a special test upon them—as respects their loyalty, and the motives which actuated them in engaging in the Vineyard work. "Let us take heed, lest a promise having been left us any should seem to come short."—Z. '10: 264, 265.

Victorious Christ Heads Procession

"When He ascended up on high He led a multitude of captives.—Eph. 4:8.

THIS GRAND EXPRESSION respecting the glorious outcome of the Savior's work is quoted by the Apostle Paul from the Psalms. (68:18.) The figure thus thrust before our mental eye is that of a great Conqueror whose victory is being heralded. With the Romans we know that it was a custom that generals returning from various wars were granted what were termed "Triumphs"—that is to say, triumphal processions, that the people might have tangible evidence of their victories.

Thus, for instance, Titus, returning from the war upon the Jews in A.D. 70, brought back with him certain notable persons and the Golden Candlestick from the Temple, and these were displayed to the eyes of the people following the conqueror. They were subsequently sculptured on the Arch of Titus, still standing in Rome. And evidently the custom was still older than the days of the Romans, since it was so prophetically set forth by the Prophet David.

Let us permit our mental eye to feast upon the scene presented in our text. Jesus, in fulfilment of the Divine Program, had left the heavenly condition and descended to earth, taking a bondsman's form or nature in order "that He, by the grace of God, might taste death for every man" (Heb. 2:9): in order that He might rescue Adam and his race from the dying and death condition in which they were—under Divine sentence and under the power of Satan.

Therefore the Redeemer counted not His life precious to Him, but freely delivered Himself up for our offenses and died, "the Just for the unjust," that He might bring mankind back into harmony with God. His humiliation ended in death, but His triumph began when, as is recorded, God raised Him from the dead by His own power, and set him at the right hand of His own Majesty—"far above angels, principalities and powers and every name that is named, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow." . . .

Leading Forth the Captives

With most of the conquerors in olden times the captives were made slaves. Not so, however, will be the result of Jesus' victory. He leads forth to liberty and eternal life those who have been slaves of sin and death. His train of captives is a long one indeed; the procession has already occupied **eighteen centuries,** and is yet to be the great work of the **thousand years** of the Messianic reign!

First of all in the procession are the saints—"the Church of the First-born, whose names are written in Heaven." In the forefront of them we see the twelve Apostles, St. Paul taking the place of Judas. The Apostles are to be Kings who are to reign with Christ in pre-eminent positions; but following them are some others of the saintly company of Kings—in all a "little flock."

Then will come a company, more numerous, but less heroic—"a great multitude," uncrowned, but with "palm branches," not antitypical Priests, but antitypical Levites, associates and servants of the Royal Priesthood, the Bride. Then will follow (Heb. 11:38-40) other faithful ones of the past, the Ancient Worthies. The Prophet speaks also of the "rebellious house." The classes previously specified were not rebellious, but gladly and willingly forsook all to do the will of the Father and to attain the liberty of sons of God, as the first-fruits of the triumph of the Lamb.

But during the thousand years of Christ's reign He will lead forth the "rebellious house"—the world of mankind—not all of them, we may be sure, for some, the Scriptures positively declare, will die the Second Death, because, after realizing their deliverance, they will love sin and will therefore be destroyed as enemies of righteousness. But it is a blessed thought that many of those who are now aliens, strangers and foreigners from God through wicked works, are in this condition of opposition, not willingly, not intelligently, but by reason of the ignorance and weaknesses which came to them by heredity, under the reign of sin and death.

It is to be a distinct feature of the great Triumph of Immanuel that every eye shall be opened and every ear unstopped, that "the knowledge of the glory of God shall fill the whole earth," during His glorious reign of righteousness. Are we not distinctly told of the time that will follow, in which all the willing and obedient shall receive the Holy Spirit, which then will be poured out "upon all flesh" even as now, during this Gospel Age, it is poured out upon God's "servants and handmaidens" only?—Joel 2:28.

Oh, that will be a glorious Triumph for the great Redeemer! In the language of the Bible, "He shall see the fruitage of the travail of His soul, and shall be satisfied." (Isa. 53:11.) What a glorious fruitage!—not only His own exaltation—not only the exaltation of His faithful Bride class, and the additional exaltation of "the virgins, her companions, which follow her," and the exaltation of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and all the Prophets, but finally the deliverance to human perfection of all the groaning creation willing to accept the same upon the Divine terms of loyalty to God and to the principles of His Government, as these shall be made known to them.

"He Gave Gifts Unto Men"

It was the custom in olden times that a king coming into authority and power should give gifts according to His wealth. Governors and princes would be needed and he would dispense the honors of these offices to those found faithful in his service, loyal in the defense of His cause. So, in this prophetic reference to our Lord's ascension, it is declared not only that He would lead forth a multitude of captives, granting them freedom, liberty, blessings, but also that He would confer certain gifts.

We might have spent valuable time guessing the nature of these gifts which the great Redeemer would dispense, but such a waste of time is unnecessary, since the Apostle proceeds to explain the matter and tells us what gifts are meant. He says, "And He gave some Apostles, and some Prophets, and some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers."

There is an astounding thought connected with this statement—that the Apostles were not self-appointed, and that they had no successors, and that the work of evangelizing, or making known the "good tidings," and the pastoral work and the teaching work amongst believers, are all under the supervision of the Head of the Church, the great Victor, who redeemed us with His blood, and who proposes, first, to lead forth a Bride class, and subsequently all the willing and obedient. . . .

Not Given to Convert the World

Noting carefully the Apostle's argument in connection with our text, we perceive that the Master did not give these gifts for the conversion of the world. He does specify, however, what they were for, namely, "for the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the Body of Christ"—the Church, the Bride class. Is it supposable that the Apostle erred in this statement and that the fact is the reverse—that these gifts were provided for the conversion of the world, and that the Apostle thoroughly misunderstood the matter and supposed that they were given for the perfecting of the saints, for the edifying of the Body of Christ? No! We are to be taught by the Apostle and may be **sure** that there is no mistake, no error in his statement.

Notice the force of the expression, "the perfecting of the saints." It is not sufficient that believers have a little knowledge, a little faith, and a measure of sanctification or devotion to the Lord, for after they have received and attained all of these things they still need the instruction of the Apostles and ministers, pastors and teachers, provided by the great Head of the Church for their perfecting. Ah! there is a force and depth of meaning in that word **perfecting.** We remember that of our Head it is written, "Being made perfect through suffering, He became the Author of eternal salvation to all who obey Him." So His followers are made perfect through suffering.

The Master's perfecting, indeed, was a little different from ours, and yet there is a similarity between the two. He was perfect before He humbled Himself; He was still perfect as the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself; but as a result of His consecration He received a begetting of the Holy Spirit to the divine nature, and His development as a New Creature required that He faithfully carry out His vow, or covenant of sacrifice, in the doing of the will of the Heavenly Father. By such faithfulness He perfected Himself on the divine plane—that is, He proved Himself worthy according to the covenant—"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive glory, honor, dominion and power."—Rev. 5:12.

Similarly the followers of Jesus are to be sharers with Him in the sufferings of this present time and in the glories which shall follow, for "If we suffer with Him we shall also reign with Him." (2 Tim. 2:12.) Although we are imperfect in the flesh, while He was perfect, yet the robe of His righteousness, the merit of His sacrifice, covers all of our blemishes and makes us, as His footstep followers, holy and acceptable before the Father, as joint-sacrificers with Jesus.

The begetting of the Holy Spirit starts us in the life divine. We are not to be perfected in the flesh, but in the spirit, and our perfection and acceptance with the Father will be demonstrated by our loyalty of heart and the fulness and thoroughness with which we submit our all to the Divine will and seek to glorify God in our bodies and Spirits which are His. (1 Cor. 6:20.) Our justification comes to us as a reward of faith, regardless of works, but our glorification will follow as a reward for faithfulness.

These Gifts Are Lasting

Not merely for a few days or years were these gifts to the Church provided; on the contrary, they were to endure throughout this entire Age, until the Church perfected shall pass beyond the veil and be forever with her Redeemer, to share His glory, honor and immortality. The Lord from time to time has raised up evangelists, pastors and teachers for this glorious service of preparing the "chaste virgin," the Church, to be the Bride in glory. But the Apostolic office, as represented in The Twelve specially provided by the Father, has continued and needs no replenishment. We still have their instructions as fully as the early Church, "that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto every good work."—2 Tim. 3:16, 17.

That the Apostle did not understand the matter to be merely for a day, but throughout this Age, until the completion of the Church, is clearly evidenced by his statement, namely, that all these gifts were for the edification of the Body of Christ and the perfecting of the saints to the last—"until we all come to the unity of the faith and to the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect Man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ."

This is a wonderful statement, however we view it. Shall we say that it applies to each individual member of the Church of Christ, and that each individual must come into that full unity of faith, and that full knowledge of the Son of God, and the perfection of manhood in Christ, and to a developed stature of maturity in Christ? Or shall we understand the meaning to be, until the entire Church of Christ shall have reached a full knowledge and shall, as a whole, have come to the condition of a perfect Man, of which Christ is the Head and we are the members—to the full development or stature of the Anointed, the Messiah, Head and members? We believe that the latter is the Apostle's thought.

Nevertheless, it cannot be disputed that the selection of these members all the way down the Age must have been along the lines here indicated. Individually, one partially developed would not be fitted for the Kingdom. One not in the unity of the faith would not be suitable. One not developed to the proper measure or stature as a Christian would not be suitable. Nothing is more plain than that the individual Christian needs a great deal of instruction, edification, building up in the holy faith, testing, proving, chiseling, polishing, fitting, preparing before he shall be ready for a place in the Kingdom.

God's People No Longer Need Be Misled

This thought is confirmed by the succeeding verses, in which the Apostle tells us that by the assistance of these, the Divinely provided gifts, teachers, etc., God's people need no longer, like children, to be tossed to and fro, and be misled by the sleight of men and cunning craftiness of those who would deceive. On the contrary, being sincere, and speaking the truth in love, they are to grow up into membership in the Anointed One in all things—coming fully and completely into fellowship and obedience, under the Head, even Christ.—Verses 14, 15.

Proceeding, the Apostle tells us that all who are recognized as members of the Body of Christ must be properly joined to the Head—by a proper compact, or covenant, intelligently made and fully intended. This union must be compacted, and it requires the entire Gospel Age to effect this development and compacting as members, that the whole Body of the Anointed may be one—symmetrical, beautiful, co-operative—making increase in its members and edifying itself in love—growing in grace and in knowledge and in character-likeness to the Head.—V. 16.

In conclusion, then, the Captain of our Salvation has gone before. He has accepted us as His joint-heirs, and we are following on, blest by the gifts which He dispensed when He ascended up on high: and we, in turn, will be His gifts to the world of mankind. When as Priests and Kings we shall be associated with our Lord, we shall bless all the families of the earth with a glorious opportunity of knowledge and obedience, that they may, if they will, attain life everlasting, "the gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord."—Rom. 6:23; Z. '12:226-228.

Ancient Worthies—How Perfected?

A PERFECT body implies a perfect mind, because the mind is a part of the body, and a man who has no brains or who has only half his brains would not be a perfect man. Probably there will be no difference of thought thus far in respect to this question, but the real point at issue would be: What constitutes a perfect character?

Father Adam had, in one sense of the word, a perfect character when he was created in God's image and likeness, being perfect both in mind and in body. His mind being in the image of God his character was good; no blemish was there; no preference for sin, but the reverse of this—an appreciation of righteousness and a tendency toward it. He had not a hard heart, but a fleshly heart—a tender heart. He would not be cruel, but just, loving and kind—all that would constitute a good man, because God made him thus.

But there is another sense in which we use the word character, a sense in which Adam never had character in full, viz., in the sense of character developed, tested and proven. God tried him, and because of his inexperience he failed, even though his character was good and his whole organism perfect. If he had known as much about God as we know, he would undoubtedly have stood the test; but had he been successful in this test respecting the eating of forbidden fruit, we have no thought that it would have been the end of his testing. Undoubtedly other tests would have come, and gradually he would have been growing in the knowledge of God, in obedience, etc.; but lacking experience he failed in the very first feature of his trial. So the Scriptures inform us regarding our Lord Jesus as a man, that he was able to endure faithfully because of his previous knowledge of the Father.

If we suppose our Lord Jesus to have been merely a perfect man as was Adam, without any additional knowledge of God, without any appreciation of his "glory with the Father before the world was," without an insight into the Divine Plan given through the holy Spirit and the Word of God, we would suppose him equally as liable to failure as was Adam; but when we remember that he had these various other blessings, then we see the force of the Scripture which says, "By his knowledge shall my righteous servant justify many, when he shall bear their iniquities"—referring to the time of his consecration unto death and his crucifixion on the cross.

Our Lord had the knowledge that enabled him to see and understand in a manner impossible to Adam. In his case we see that the testing through the Adversary during the forty days of fasting in the wilderness was not counted of the Father as sufficient proof of his character-perfection, but, rather, we find that "he was tempted in all points like as we are"—that for three and a half years this testing work continued. This inference is to be drawn not only from the New Testament records of our Lord's experiences, but also from the words of the Apostle, "Consider him who endured such contradiction of sinners against himself." Again, the same thought is illustrated by the high priest who, during the time which represents our Lord's earthly ministry, was in the Holy, crumbling the incense upon the fire, thus symbolically representing the testing and proving, in every particular, of our Lord's character.

If, therefore, it was appropriate that our Lord should be tested after he was begotten, as a New Creature, after he had consecrated his life even unto death, and if it is appropriate that we also should be fully tested after we become New Creatures, begotten of the holy Spirit, then we might wonder in what manner the Ancient Worthies received any testing which would constitute a full proof of character. When we examine the records of these men —Enoch, Abraham, Moses, Samson, Daniel and others—we find that they manifested great faith; and they endured severe ordeals and testings of their loyalty to God, and their confidence in him. It does not surprise us, therefore, that the testimony "that they pleased God," was given respecting them. This assures us that they had considerable character development. God must have seen their hearts to be loyal, else he never would have considered them worthy of the "better resurrection." At the same time we believe that they will have need of further experience.

Faith seems to be the chief element of character that was developed under Samson's experiences. We do not know how much patience, long suffering, brotherly-kindness, gentleness, meekness, etc., were developed in his character; nothing is stated respecting the matter, but we have no reason to suppose that Samson was a very gentle man. The slaying of 3,000 men with the jaw-bone of an ass as well as other experiences, would not seem to imply this. We may reasonably suppose, therefore, that though Samson will be brought back in an absolutely perfect condition, and under the favorable conditions of the Millennial Age, there will probably be experiences in life that he never encountered and that will be so new to him that he might be in danger of making mistakes. Assuredly he will have much to learn respecting the things of the Spirit of God. The Scriptures state that all will be brought under the blessing of the holy Spirit in the future.

These Ancient Worthies will not be begotten of the Spirit, as is the Church, but the same prophecy that relates how the servants and hand-maids are to receive the holy Spirit during this Gospel Age, tells also that "after those days God will pour out his Spirit upon all flesh." And since those Ancient Worthies lived before the outpouring of the holy Spirit, their time for receiving a measure of this blessing belongs to the future and undoubtedly the giving of the holy Spirit to them will have much to do with fixing their characters, which will already be perfect. They will be brought to greater knowledge, and having already endured testings and been proven loyal, they will have only to learn how to use their talents and powers in full conformity with the Divine will.

We understand that these men would be in a die-able condition, in the sense of being mortal and liable to death; but that they would come under the condemnation of the Second Death is highly improbable. If any man has stood trial under conditions of ignorance and superstition, and the measurable darkness of his time—has endured temptations from the world and from the Adversary, and proven faithful under those conditions—it is reasonable to suppose that he would be found perfect under the conditions of the Millennial Age, which will be so much more favorable to righteousness and full obedience to God. We therefore have no reason to suppose that any of the Ancient Worthies will come short of the eternal goal, eternal life.

The fact that the Ancient Worthies will be under the New Covenant arrangement, under the Mediatorial Kingdom, not having full access to the Father until the close of the Millennial Age, is not an evidence of disfavor nor of anything contrary to their best interests, but rather a very gracious arrangement by which any possible mistake would be covered by Christ's mediation and would not bring them under the Divine sentence of the Second Death. We are not expecting that they will make mistakes, but if, upon their awakening, they should be at once turned over to God, and God's law should operate as we understand it will, and as it did in Adam's case, so that the slightest deflection would mean death, we see their position would be much less favorable. Therefore, the Millennial Age will provide abundant opportunity to come to full knowledge; and we believe the Scriptures to indicate, though they do not positively so state, that their fidelity being further tested by their service during the Millennial Age, as a part of the natural seed of Abraham, in blessing the remainder of his seed and all the Gentiles who will come into that seed, will constitute them worthy of an exchange of nature. —Z. '10:157, 158.

◆

God's favor to this House of Sons, of whom Jesus is the Head (Hebrews 3:6), is manifested often in the trials, difficulties, chastisements and earthly losses and afflictions which they experience, all of which are designed to work out for them "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." —Z. '13:29.

KERNELS KERNELS KERNELS

With the Apostle we can say, "When I am weak, then am I strong;" when I realize my own imperfections and shortcomings then, by faith realizing the strength and perfection of my dear Redeemer and his provision for all who are his, I can be strong in faith and trust and love, and realize that the exceeding great and precious promises of God's Word are yea and amen to me.—Z. '05:207.

◆

Our knowledge and love should not cast out the fear of displeasing God; for proper fear (reverence) must never be cast out. The more we have of reverential love, the more of the proper fear we shall have. Who would not fear to offend a brother or a neighbor whom he loved and appreciated? Much more should we dread offending our just, wise, loving God.—Z. '13:158.

◆

God's purposes will be accomplished. But happy is he who is accounted worthy of the privilege of any service to the Lord or to the least of His brethren.—Z. '16:268.

◆

To some the thought of being taken away from the present life suddenly, violently, in fiery troubles, etc., would be a terrible prospect; not so will it be with the members of the Elijah class. Waiting for their change, and living in daily readiness of heart, therefore, they go on without trepidation. On the contrary, in whatever way they shall be taken, it will be the culmination of their hopes for which they so long have waited and prayed—their deliverance. —Z. '15:287.

◆

Because of the imperfection of the flesh inherited through Father Adam, the Lord's children can never in this life attain the perfection that they would wish. There will be blemishes and weaknesses of brain, of thought, and of the entire body. But they should live as nearly up to the standard as possible, and the Lord will compensate for their unintentional weaknesses. His grace will be sufficient for them to enable them to overcome.—Z. '15:108.

◆

It is sweet and precious, in many senses of the word, to be privileged to participate in the sufferings of Christ, in any sacrifices or services for the Lord and His cause. The sweet mingles freely with the bitter. But the Lord promises that in the future the Cup of new wine in the Kingdom shall more than compensate for any bitterness of the present time. Our Cup is full, but we would not wish it one drop less.—Z. '15:91.

◆

Jesus gave an illustration, or parable, declaring that those who heard His Message and rendered obedience thereto would be like a wise man, who built his house upon the rock, where the descending rains would not wash away the foundation from underneath, nor in any wise harm it. The storms of life are sure to come; and the great crisis of life, death, is sure to come. Amidst those trials there will be calmness, confidence and security for such as have accepted the Lord's arrangement and have been walking to the best of their ability in the footsteps of Jesus. To them death will be merely a transition from the earthly state to the Heavenly, by the power of the First Resurrection—"changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye"; for "flesh and blood cannot inherit the Kingdom of God." (1 Corinthians 15:50-52.) Their faith and confidence, built upon God's promises, can never fail them. For such there is laid up a crown of life, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give them at that Day.—2 Timothy 4:8; Z. '14:59.

◆

As the trial of faith was the most prominent feature of Abraham's testing, so it must needs be with us, his true children. It is the trial of your faith that is much more precious than gold, as the Apostle says, and he assures us that "without faith it is impossible to please God." For this reason it is required of those who now walk in the narrow way that they shall walk by faith and not by sight. When the time comes for the shining forth of the Sun of Righteousness and the scattering of the darkness and mystery that surrounds the divine character and word and the permission of evil, there will be plenty ready and able to walk by sight. —Z. '07:43.

◆

By the Word we can see that the Heavenly glories are nigh, even at the door, and that the earthly joys, ambitions and prospects under present conditions will be transitory, leading to the great time of trouble and anarchy which will blight every earthly prospect and at the same time mean the realization of our Heavenly hopes and prospects. —Z. '07:4.

◆

THE BLESSEDNESS OF PERFECT TRUST

Can you doubt that He who cares for the lilies of the field cares for you? Will not He who nourishes and waters them, and who gives them the genial sunshine and the refreshing showers, more surely feed and water and nourish and care for His child? The lilies do not trouble themselves as to whether they shall have what they need for their growth and sustenance. They simply look up to God and receive their needs.

"They do not toil;
Content with their allotted task
They do but grow; they do not ask
A richer lot, a higher sphere,
But in their loveliness appear,
And grow, and smile, and do their best,
And unto God they leave the rest."
—Z. '17:246.

◆

Are not the Lord's people commanded "to be perfect, even as your Father which is in Heaven is perfect"? And if this is so, what in each other's conduct would they have to forgive? Ah! there it is. At heart they must will perfection absolutely; but how to perform it they find not; hence, as the Apostle says, in many things we all fail. "There is none righteous; no, not one." More than this, the Lord's elect are not, according to the flesh, the highest, the noblest, the best. "Not many great, not many noble, not many rich hath God chosen."—Z. '08: 325-326.

◆

IT IS NOT THE DEED WE DO

"It is not the deed we do,
  Though the deed be ever so fair,
But the love that the dear Lord looketh for,
  Hidden with holy care
  In the heart of the deed so fair.

"The love is the priceless thing,
  The treasure our treasure must hold;
Or ever the Lord will take the gift,
  Or tell the worth of the gold
  By the love that cannot be told."—Z. '12:180.

◆

Where honesty of heart prevails amongst the Lord's people, schisms, divisions, should be unknown. The Lord's guidance and instruction should be sought—His Word through His Apostles. Moreover, since the Apostles fell asleep, the Lord has been pleased to use faithful brethren in the Church as finger-boards to indicate the right path, in harmony with His Word through the Apostles and Prophets. The thing necessary to each is the honest conscience, the humble spirit, and the pure heart. —Z. '16:138.

◆

We should always clearly differentiate between credulity and faith—credulity, which is reprehensible, and faith, which is commendable. A crystallized faith, such as will carry us safely over the quicksands of ignorance and superstition, and bring us safely to the goal which God has marked out for us, needs more than human assurances, more than our own or other men's imaginations. True faith seeks for a positive Message from the Lord. It requires diligence in its endeavor to find that Message. Then it becomes an evidence, or proof, of things invisible.—Z. '13: 60-61.

◆

"IN HIS RIGHT HAND SEVEN STARS"

The One whom we recognize as the Instructor and Caretaker of the candlesticks, we are also to recognize as having in His right hand—in His favor as well as His power—seven stars, the angels, the messengers, of the seven Churches. Apparently the stars represent special ministers, or servants of the Church. In Revelation 12:1 the Church is pictured as a Woman crowned with twelve stars. These stars evidently represent the Twelve Apostles as the special lights of the Church. Similarly, in the picture before us, the seven stars which the Lord holds in His right hand seem to represent special light-bearers in the Church—in each of its seven phases or stages of development. That they are in His right hand seems to teach us that these should be considered as in some special sense under the Master's guidance, protection and care in the interest of the Churches which they represented.

It will be noticed that the messages to the various Churches are addressed to these stars, messengers, angels, as though our Lord would have us understand that the appropriate message for each epoch in the Church's experience would be sent by the Lord through a particular star, or messenger, whom He would especially commission as His representative. Our Lord himself is represented by the great light of the sun; and His special messengers in the Church throughout the entire period of the Gospel Age are consistently enough represented as stars.—Z. '16: 345.

◆

A father illustrated a principle to his child at the seashore by laying a silver dollar upon the beach within reach of the incoming waves. Soon the sands were covering it and it was out of sight: then before he allowed the child to dig it up he said, "Everything valuable that we allow to lie unused is soon buried by the tide of life as this dollar has been by the tide of the ocean." This is a good illustration: it is not necessary that we dig into the earth to bury the talent; if we simply allow it to lie unused it will soon be out of sight.—Z. '06: 318-319.

◆

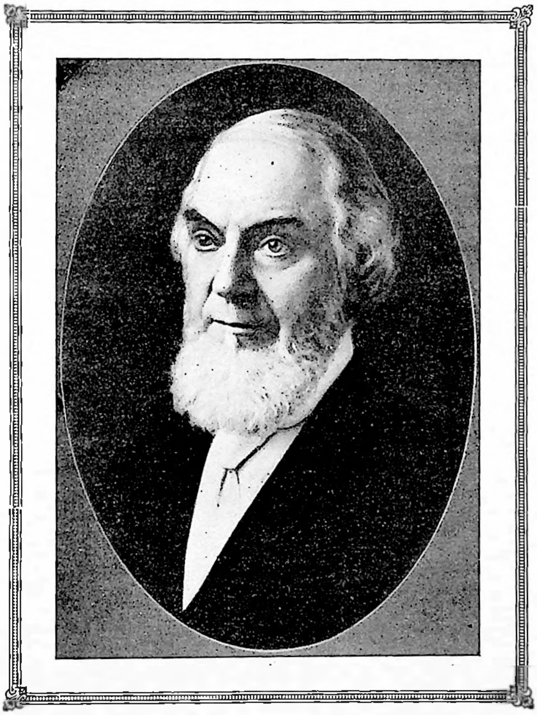
SOMETIME, SOMEWHERE, EACH FINDS GETHSEMANE

"In golden youth, when seems the earth
A summer land of songs and mirth,
And not a shadow lurks in sight,
We do not know it, but there lies,
Somewhere, veiled under evening skies,
A Garden all must sometime see,
  Gethsemane, Gethsemane!
  Somewhere his own Gethsemane!

"With joyous steps we go our ways,
Love lends a halo to the days,
Light sorrows sail like clouds afar,
We laugh and say, 'How strong we are!'
We hurry on, and hurrying go
Close to the border land of woe,
That waits for you and waits for me;
  Gethsemane! Gethsemane!
  Forever waits Gethsemane!

"Down shadowy lanes, across strange streams,
Bridged over by our broken dreams,
Behind the misty cape of years,
Close to the great salt-font of tears,
The Garden lies; strive as you may,
You cannot miss it in your way.
All paths that have been or shall be
Pass somewhere through Gethsemane.

"All those who journey, soon or late,
Must pass within the Garden's gate,
Must kneel alone in darkness there
And battle with some fierce despair,
God pity those who cannot say,
'Not mine, but Thine,' who only pray,
'Let this cup pass!' and cannot see
The purpose in Gethsemane.
  Gethsemane! Gethsemane!
  God help us through Gethsemane!"
—Z. '17:119.



BROTHER RUSSELL

SUPPLEMENT TO OLD CORN GEMS, No. 68

Old Corn Gems

NUMBER SIXTY-NINE

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KERNELS KERNELS KERNELS

"One reads with father's specs upon his head,
And sees the thing just as his father did;
Some read to prove a pre-adopted creed,
Thus understand but little what they read;
And every passage in the Book they bend
To make it suit that all-important end.
Some people read, as I have often thought,
To teach the Book, instead of to be taught."
—Z. '15:249.

◇

As we look at ourselves, we come to realize how imperfect are all the members of the fallen race; and when we consider God's perfection, we can conceive of only one quality that the fallen creature could possess that would meet with Divine approval. That one quality is **honesty.** The true Christian must, in honesty, confess his shortcomings, his own deficiencies. He must, in honesty, acknowledge that his sufficiency is of God, through Christ, and not of himself. He must honestly strive for the standard set before him in the Gospel. He must honestly admit that he cannot do the things that he would. He must candidly and fully accept the righteousness of God in Christ Jesus, as the covering for his blemishes.—Z. '14:138.

◇

The all-important matter is the keeping of the heart, nevertheless it is proper for us to utilize every item of knowledge furnished us by the Lord, that we may keep our heads right, that we may be able to view matters from the Divine standpoint.—Z. '10:85.

◇

Doing our very best, yet surely coming short, the Apostle's words apply to us: "The righteousness of the Law is fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit." We walk after the spirit, and would walk up to it if we could, but, being unable to do so, "The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin." This is the happy state of all who through faith and consecration become children of God during the Gospel Age. Their faith and good intentions and good efforts, by the grace of God, make good their deficiencies.—Z. '12:116.

◇

The Apostle's declaration, "Ye cannot do the things which ye would," is in full accord with all our experiences. We can sometimes do as we would in some things, we can gain the victory over the flesh; but there are certain weaknesses, failings, blemishes in our flesh which are so powerful that the new mind never gets as complete a mastery over them as it desires. Nevertheless in all the battles being waged the new mind grows stronger and stronger while the flesh grows weaker and weaker. The Scriptural proposition, however, is that we must expect to have more or less of these battles until our dying moments. Thank God that will be the end of the strife, for in the resurrection we are promised new bodies, perfect, complete, in which the new mind will be able to exercise itself without conflict. That is the rest which remains for the people of God, and associated with it will be various other blessings, honors, dignities and responsibilities which the Lord has promised.—Z. '06:297.

◇

The more we possess of the spirit of holiness, devotion to God, to righteousness, the spirit of love and devotion to the brethren, the more may we be sons of consolation, pouring forth upon all with whom we have contact the unction from the "Holy One," the anointing, the perfume of love.—Z. '09:26.

◇

Every right thought and act tends to establish the character in righteousness, while every wrong thought and act, and every self-deception tends to confirm and establish an unrighteous character.—Z. '05:360.

◇

Nothing is much more injurious to spirituality than indecision, wavering, lukewarmness.—Z. '12:34.

◇

St. James gives some forceful illustrations. Christians should put a bridle of restraint into their own mouths, even as they put bits into the mouths of their horses. They should have a rudder whereby to steer their own course in life, even as they put a rudder upon a ship. They should remember that the tongue, although one of the least members of the body, is the most influential of all. A blow struck by the fist might injure one person near enough, but a bitter word, like a poisoned arrow, may strike afar off; yea, like a shell from a great gun, it may explode and do much damage. Yea, More! Its influence may pass through telephones, telegraph wires, cables and wireless apparatus to every nook and corner of the earth, and be reproduced in newspapers all over the world. What a tremendous power! what a sacred trust! what a talent for use or misuse!—Z. '12:148.

GENERAL CONVENTION

All Standfast Bible Students are heartily invited to attend the next General Convention, to be held in SEATTLE, WASH., on Friday, Saturday and Sunday, December 2nd, 3rd and 4th, 1921.

All meetings will be held at Woog's Hall, Ballard, corner of Market Street and Seventeenth Avenue, with the exception of the Friday night meeting, which will be held in Ballard Hall, corner of Market Street and Twenty-Second Avenue.

Take Ballard North car, No. 27, to Market Street. Good hotel accommodation will be found in Ballard.

For further information write to Bro. Alex. Hogen, 6713 Seventeenth Ave. N.W., Seattle, Wash.

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OLD CORN GEMS

NUMBER SIXTY-NINE

"And they did eat of the OLD CORN of the land on the morrow after the Passover . . . and the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the OLD CORN of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year." Joshua 5:11-12.

A SAFE RULE

"WHERE A BROTHER GIVES AN INTERPRETATION OF A SCRIPTURE WHICH DIFFERS FROM THAT GIVEN BY BROTHER RUSSELL, AND BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION SEEMS REASONABLE AND IN HARMONY WITH THE PLAN OF GOD, THEN WE BELIEVE IT A SAFE RULE TO FOLLOW BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION, FOR THE REASON THAT HE IS THE SERVANT OF THE CHURCH, SO CONSTITUTED BY THE LORD FOR THE LAODICEAN PERIOD: AND THEREFORE WE SHOULD EXPECT THE LORD TO TEACH US THROUGH HIM. WHERE THERE ARISES A DOUBT IN THE MIND AS TO WHICH INTERPRETATION IS CORRECT, THEN IT IS ALWAYS SAFER TO RESOLVE THAT DOUBT IN FAVOR OF BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION. WE BELIEVE SUCH TO BE IN HARMONY WITH THE LORD'S WILL." Z. '18:51.

The Blessing of "The Cup of Salvation"

"What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me? I will take the cup of salvation, and call upon the name of the Lord. I will pay my vows unto the Lord now, in the presence of all His people."—Psalm 116:12-14.

TO SPIRITUAL ISRAEL these words have a peculiar significance which they could not have had to the Prophet David. Nevertheless, we would suppose that the Prophet had to a considerable degree the proper thought as to the sentiment of the words. King David no doubt felt an appreciation of God's goodness. His Psalms show us that he had a very appreciative heart, grateful for the blessings that came to him from the Lord. Properly enough his heart cried out: "What shall I render unto the Lord?" What return can I make for all His lovingkindness?

David knew of God's promise to Abraham; he knew that God would sometime bless all the families of the earth, and that this blessing would come through the Seed of Abraham. The Children of Israel knew that they were Abraham's seed. King David was one of these, and he felt that in some way he would be identified with this Promise. The matter was more or less vague to him; but, nevertheless, Abraham's Seed was to bless the world.

In proposing to "take the cup of salvation," we think the Psalmist had in mind that whatever experiences the Lord might consider necessary for him he would accept; for he must have a share in that salvation. He would continue to call upon the Lord that he might have such a share; he would pay his vows unto the Lord "in the presence of all His people." He had made solemn vows, and he would fulfil them—he would consider this a privilege; he would delight in doing God's will.

Deeper Significance to Spiritual Israel

To the Christian, however, all this has a much deeper significance. Beginning with our Lord Jesus, these words have a special meaning to each of the sons of God called to joint-heirship with the great Head of the Church. Having been begotten of the Holy Spirit and received into sonship, these wish to make a special return for all God's mercies. These have the actual forgiveness of their sins through Jesus, as David did not. His sins were only typically covered; and if he could say: "What shall I render?" surely much more should we say: "What shall I render unto the Lord?"

The Apostle Paul exhorts us: "I beseech you, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, and acceptable unto God—your reasonable service." This is what we gladly render then—our bodies as **living sacrifices.** In every truly noble heart gratitude is the responsive chord to kindness and love; and no harmony is sweeter or more inspiring to noble deeds and lofty purposes. God would have His children cultivate for their own sake, as well as for the sake of others, all the graces of true nobility and moral excellence. It is therefore most fitting that **we should note every deed of love and kindness toward us, and be careful to return the gratitude and appreciation due.** How often does love go unrequited because selfishness or thoughtlessness crowds out the nobler instincts of the soul!

While human love and acts of kindness often draw largely upon us for the exercise of this grace of gratitude, appreciation, how much more does the constant loving-kindness and tender mercy of our Heavenly Father thus fittingly draw upon our inmost being to respond in grateful acknowledgment and praise! To Him we are indebted for every good that we possess. What this implies only those can know who have been brought by His love into the secret place of the Most High, and made to feast upon the "finest of the wheat," the wealth of our

Father's Storehouse. We are the special objects of His grace.

"His Loving Kindness, Oh, How Great!"

And who of us cannot trace a long line of special providences on our behalf? Who of us as we take a mental retrospect of our lives cannot exclaim with the poet:

"Looking back I praise the way
God has led me day by day"!

How wonderfully the Lord has guided His people! His children have ever been His constant care. No good thing hath He withheld from them, and all things have been made to work together for their good if they obeyed Him. Who that has trusted the Lord through many years, through sunshine and shadow, through smiles and tears, by still waters and through storm and tempest, has not proved the verity of His precious promises and His abiding faithfulness! Surely, "Not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the Lord your God spake concerning you!" (Joshua 23:14.) In the smallest and in the greatest affairs of our lives He has ever watched for our interests. Every cloud has had a golden lining!

What, then, shall we render unto the Lord for all His benefits? What have we, indeed, that we have not received from Him? Nothing! As a tender parent loves to see his child appreciatively accept his favors, so does our Heavenly Father regard our attitude toward Him, and our manifestation of appreciation of His favors and love toward us. His unspeakable gifts to us were purchased at a great cost to His heart. Then we will thankfully take the cup of salvation, through faith in our Redeemer, and pay our vows unto the Lord. We will drink this cup with our dear Master—this cup of suffering and of joy. "We will trust and not be afraid."

The Father has made a special provision for those who have made a full surrender of themselves to Him. The experiences which He has arranged for them constitute "the cup of salvation." And in accepting this cup from the Lord, we are accepting all the experiences that come to us in His providence, whatever they may be—joy or sorrow, pain or pleasure or anything. As Jesus exclaimed: "The cup which my Father hath poured for me, shall I not drink it?" so should this be the language of our hearts. It had in type been foretold of our Lord that He should be lifted up, even as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness. He knew that He was to be the great antitypical Sin-Offering; that He was to be "made sin" for fallen man. Yet this cup that the Father had poured for Him He declared Himself very willing to drink. And this is the cup which He has given to us.

Our Savior said to His disciples who desired to sit next to Him in the Kingdom: "Are ye able to drink of the cup that I shall drink of?" He Himself continued to drink of that cup until the end—He drank the dregs of the cup. And so it will be with His followers. We are to drink of this same cup. It is our individual cup, and yet it is His cup. If we be truly loyal we will accept our share of the cup thankfully, gladly. And we know that as we drink of it He will be with us; we shall not be alone. He supervises the experiences of each of His members; and with every temptation and trial He will provide some way of escape, if the trial threatens to become too severe.

The Cup of Joy in the Kingdom

On the occasion of the institution of the Memorial of His death, the Master in His conversation with the Apostles said: "But I say unto you, I will not drink henceforth of this fruit of the vine until that Day when I drink it new with you in My Father's Kingdom." (Matthew 26:29.) Our Lord was here contrasting two great Days—the Day of suffering and the Day of glory. This Gospel Age has been the Day of suffering. The Millennial Age will be the Day of glory, and is especially spoken of as "the Day of Christ."

The fruit of the vine, the literal cup, represents two thoughts. The cup of wine is produced at the cost of the life of the grape. The grape loses its own individuality. The juice is pressed out, and thus the fruit of the vine is made ready for use. The cup of wine—the juice of the grape—represents, however, not only the crushing of the grape, but also the exhilaration that comes as the result. So in our drinking of this figurative cup. To us it symbolizes our Savior's sufferings and death, and our own participation with Him in these sufferings. But wine also represents joy, gladness, and is thus used in the Scriptures. So in the sense in which the Lord used the words "fruit of the vine," quoted in the preceding paragraph, the cup represented the joys of the Kingdom.

In the earthly experiences of our Lord Jesus the Father marked out for Him a certain specific course. This course constituted His cup of suffering and death. But the Father promised Him that after He had drunk this cup faithfully, He should be given a different cup, a different experience—glory, honor and immortality. And then the Savior was authorized by the Father to make the same proposition to those who might desire to become His followers—that if they would suffer with Him, would drink His cup of death with Him, then they should participate with Him in His future cup of joy.

Our cup is a cup of joy and also a cup of bitterness. But when we are called upon to drink a bitter draft, let us remember Him who bravely and faithfully partook of this bitterness, rejoicing to do the Father's will; and let us take courage, and likewise rejoice that we are accounted worthy to share this cup with our beloved Lord. And as He who was perfect needed strength and help Divine in connection with His experiences in the drinking of the cup, as He sought the Father in earnest prayer for the needed assistance, so must we do. We should also be continually on our guard lest we enter into temptation, lest we look away from Him from whom alone cometh our help.

"I will pay my vows unto the Lord now," said the Psalmist. Now is the time sacrifices are to be offered—not by and by. The Lord has so arranged that this Vow which we take upon ourselves, this Covenant of Sacrifice, must be fulfilled by us. The flesh which we consecrate must be consumed. If we seek to withdraw the sacrifice from the altar, we shall be dealt with in such a manner as to destroy the flesh; else we ourselves shall be destroyed. If we faithfully drink of the cup which the Father has prepared for us, we shall afterward receive the blessings which He has promised to those who thus drink. Therefore, now, in the present life, we drink of this cup He has given us; for unless we do this **now**, we shall have no share in the Kingdom blessings in the life to come.

In our Lord's case, literal crucifixion was necessary. He must bear the fullest measure of the Law's demand; He must bear the penalty of its every violation, even as in the case of the vilest criminal under the Law; otherwise He could not have redeemed every Jew. He must bear the curse of the Law—He must hang on a tree. But in our experiences, the cross will not be a literal cross of wood; the nails will not be literal nails; but bitter words and slander and misrepresentation will surely be our portion—and perhaps physical violence in some form to some of the last members of the Body. We do not know.

By Way of the Cross

"Whosoever will save his life shall lose it." We are all to pass through the trying experiences represented by the **wine-press**. We are to lay down our lives in the Divine service. We are to submit ourselves to the crushing experiences, to be obliterated as individuals, in the human sense, and to become New Creatures. "If we suffer [with Him], we shall also reign with Him"—not otherwise. So we joyfully accept the invitation to drink of His cup. And not until the cup has been drained to the last shall we receive the other cup—the cup of Kingdom joys. While our Lord had a great blessing in the obedience which He rendered to the Father, yet it was a trying time for Him down to the last moment, when He cried, "It is finished." And so with the Church. We must drink **all** of the cup; none of the contents is to be left. We must endure **all** of the experiences.

All the sufferings of Christ will be complete when the Body of Christ shall have finished its course. The new cup of joy was given our Lord when He was received up into glory. Then all the angels of God worshiped Him. Soon our cup of joy will be given to us. No doubt it was a glorious time when the sleeping saints were awakening in the spring of 1878, and entered into their reward and received the cup of blessing. And one by one, those who were alive and remained at the Coming of the Master are being gathered Home. Undoubtedly we shall all partake of this joy with them soon, if we are faithful. We believe the fulness of joy will not be reached until all the members of Christ are with Him beyond the veil. Then we shall share His Throne and partake of His glory. Then with our beloved Lord we shall drink of the "new wine" in the Kingdom; for the promise is to all His faithful saints. . . .

Then let us appreciate more and more this "cup of blessing" which we are privileged to drink with our blessed Master; and let us "call upon the name of the Lord" for grace to help in every time of need. We need Him daily, hourly, momentarily. And we may come to the Throne of Grace at any time in the name of our great Advocate.

Our Father's ear is ever open to the cry of His children. They are as dear to Him "as the apple of His eye." They "are graven upon the palms of His hands." "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you," is His promise to His own. All that we can render will be at best very, very little in return for all His bounties, for all His matchless grace toward us. But the measure of love and zeal that accompanies our little all will indicate the measure of our gratitude to our Heavenly Father and our great Redeemer.

"What shall I render, Lord, to Thee?
  Thy love surpasses all my thought!
What can a fitting tribute be
  To Him who my poor life hath bought?

"Who sought me in my low estate,
  And raised me up to heights Divine!
What words can fitly sound Thy praise,
  Or thought encompass love like Thine?

"What shall I render, Lord, to Thee?
  My heart, my strength, my life, I bring!
My hands, my voice, in service glad,
  To Thee, my Savior and my King!"
—Z. '14:279-281.

"Lord, Teach Us to Pray"

"Pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks."—1 Thessalonians 5:17, 18.

IN THE beginning, when Adam was in harmony with God, he was in the condition represented in the Scriptures as covenant relationship with God. The Word declares that Adam broke this holy Covenant. (Hosea 6:7, margin.) He became a sinner; and his children, born later, were sinners with him, through heredity. Instead of being born in covenant relationship with God, the children of Adam were born aliens. But God has had dealings with a few who exercised special faith and a desire to come into harmony with Him. Abel, the second son of Adam, was one of these. He approached God with an animal sacrifice and was accepted. Enoch and Noah also came into a condition of fellowship with the Lord by faith, even though they were still legally under the condemnation passed upon Adam, the Ransom-price not yet having been given.

Later on, God entered into covenant relationship with Abraham, because of his great faith and obedience; and afterwards with his son Isaac; then with his grandson Jacob. Still later, God entered into relationship with the seed of Jacob, under the Law Covenant at Sinai. The Lord had changed the name of Jacob to Israel—"a prince with God" (Genesis 32:24-30); and the whole nation of Israel, the descendants of Jacob, were received as God's people, and were treated as if without sin. They had the privilege of going to Him in prayer. But the sins of the Jewish nation were only typically blotted out from year to year. The blood of bulls and goats could never really take away sin, and the Jews held only the relationship of servants to God.

The Gentiles were altogether without God. They had no privilege of prayer. We come down to the beginning of the Gospel Age and to the case of Cornelius. We read that he was a just man, who gave much alms to the people and prayed always. But his prayers could not be accepted, even after Jesus died. The death of Jesus did not bring Cornelius into covenant relationship with God. But when the seventy symbolic weeks of Jewish favor had been fulfilled, the due time had come for the Gospel to go to the Gentiles. God was then ready to receive him, and He sent an angel to him, who gave him this message from the Lord: "Cornelius, thy prayers and thine alms have come up for a memorial before God." The prayers and the alms of Cornelius had risen up as an incense before the Lord.

Had God not accepted these offerings before? No. They had been noted of God, but had not been received. God's way of receiving—except in a limited or typical way previous to the Gospel Age—is by certain definite means which He has appointed—through an Advocate in this Age, and through a Mediator in the next. "No man cometh unto the Father but by Me," says Jesus. Even when the due time had arrived, Cornelius could not come until God sent him word how to proceed.

Knowledge of Truth Necessary

The angel of the Lord said to Cornelius: "Send men to Joppa, and call for one Simon, whose surname is Peter, who shall tell thee words whereby thou and all thy house shall be saved." (Acts 11:13, 14.) Those words were necessary to his saving—to the bringing of him into covenant relationship with God. Cornelius, being obedient, sent for Simon Peter, who gave him the necessary instruction for drawing nigh unto God through Jesus. And unless we come to the Father through Christ, our prayers would not be received any more than those of Cornelius had been.

What St. Peter told Cornelius was to the effect that God had provided a great Sin-Offering; that Jesus had tasted death for every man; that now, in advance of dealing with the world, God is taking out a Little Flock, to be joined with Christ in the blessing of the world. When Cornelius heard the good Message, he believed with all his heart; and likewise those who were with him. Doubtless he had heard of Jesus before, but now he understood the matter. He had been in the right condition of heart all along. He had been praying and fasting. But even so he could not be accepted of God except through Jesus. He must have Christ as his Advocate.

How Jesus Becomes Our Advocate

But what does it mean to have Jesus as our Advocate? It means that first, we must accept Him as our Ransom from sin and death. Next, He tells us, "If any man will be My disciple, let him deny himself, and take up his cross and follow Me." By merely believing that Jesus died, and that He was holy, etc., no one can become His disciple. "The devils also believe, and tremble." But justification to life comes when we receive the Lord on His terms. Then He becomes our Advocate.

No one has a right to expect an answer to prayer except one who has become a disciple of Christ through full consecration. And whosoever cometh to the Father by Him shall in no wise be cast out. (John 6:37.) There is but one exception to this rule, and this is a class of minors, children lacking the full age of responsibility and of comprehension of these matters, one or both of whose parents are disciples of Christ. That age of responsibility would vary—in some it might be from twelve to fifteen years of age, and in some even later. But whoever reaches the point of full comprehension and responsibility, and does not consecrate himself to the Lord, would lose the privilege of prayer. In the case, then, of a minor child, either of whose parents is consecrated, he would have a right to look for answers to his prayers to God. . . .

Our Lives To Be a Prayer

Prayer seems to be the natural attitude of the human mind toward the Almighty. Even the heathens have a disposition to pray. Their fears, their hopes, all lead them to appeal to some great Power beyond themselves. But the people of God, who know of His Wisdom, Power and Love, and who have met the conditions of acceptable prayer, are alone authorized to come to the Throne of Grace. We realize what a blessing it is to have access to God, access to His presence—to have the ear of the Almighty Ruler of the Universe. We know that with the emperors and kings of earth it is very difficult to gain a hearing; and that with people of great prominence it is not easy to secure an audience. Yet the great God has made provision that His people may come to Him and make their petitions known.

The unrepentant sinner cannot come to God. But Divine Wisdom has made arrangement by which the sinner can get rid of his sin, and can then come to Him in prayer and communion. The Jews had typical sacrifices, a typical Atonement Day, and a typical forgiveness of sins. But the forgiveness of our sins, through the merit of Christ's sacrifice, is actual, and brings us to the place of acceptableness with the Father. He is pleased to have His children come to Him in prayer. And it is our glad privilege to offer Him worship and praise—the homage of our hearts.

We would make a distinction between worship and prayer. Worship is a bowing down, an acknowledgment of the majesty of God, an act of reverence, of adoration. But prayer is the offering of a petition. So when the Lord's people are encouraged in His Word to come to Him in prayer, it is with the understanding that they are informed before they come as to what is pleasing to God for them to request. We have an example given of what a proper prayer would be in the one which our Lord taught His disciples.

The Holy Spirit is the blessing most to be sought. This Spirit of God may be possessed in a greater or a lesser measure. We are given a measure of the Spirit when we are accepted as the disciples of Christ; and that flame of love there started is to become a consuming power in our lives. It is to burn out everything contrary to God, that our life may be a burning and shining light. In proportion as we recognize that we are deficient in the Spirit of righteousness, the Spirit of Truth, in that same proportion we should be importunate in prayer. Whoever realizes his need, and knows the Source from which he can obtain the needed supply, will come to the Throne of Heavenly Favor. We are not to neglect the duties and responsibilities of life in order to spend much time each day upon our knees, but our entire life is to be a ceaseless prayer.

From the time we become the Lord's children, we should strive more and more to attain the character-likeness to Christ, and we should continue in prayer and not faint. We should seek for more and more of the Spirit of the Lord, and should see that we fulfil the conditions by which we may obtain the filling of the Spirit. In this sense of the word, we should pray without ceasing, continuing to present the petition until we receive what we desire. But we shall not obtain the fulness of our desire until we are changed into the higher life, into the perfection of the new nature, in the resurrection. Then we shall pray no more. Then we shall be fully satisfied. Prayer will be swallowed up of praise.

Our Lord's Sample Prayer

In the prayer taught us by our Lord, we first give honor to God, recognizing Him as our Father, acknowledging His greatness, and expressing the desire that His Name be hallowed. We remember the Kingdom that is promised; and we tell Him of our desire of heart for that Kingdom to come. We pray that His will may be fully done on earth. This implies that we have given up our own will, that we wish to have God's will wholly done in our mortal bodies.

In this prayer there is a brief mention of our daily temporal needs: "Give us this day our daily bread"—no stipulation of fruits and vegetables, of delicacies, etc.—but simply our necessities for the day. We ask no more—we wish no more. Then we pray that our trespasses may be forgiven, **even as we forgive.** Finally comes the petition for our protection from evil influences. This expresses the appreciation of the fact that there are temptations from those with whom we have contact, and from the powers of evil—the powers of the air—and from our own flesh; and that we need Divine aid. The petitions of this prayer, however, are very brief. . . .

Undoubtedly if we had the right conception of prayer—the Bible conception—our prayers in public would be very brief. The Scriptures are the only criterion, the only guide. They give us no account of any instance where the Lord's saints offered lengthy prayers in public. Praying in an unknown tongue would also be valueless, the Apostle Paul tells us, unless some one present interpret the same; and if one prays in an incoherent manner, so that he cannot be understood by those who hear, prayer might as well be offered in an unknown tongue. "How shall any say, Amen, at thy giving of thanks, seeing he understandeth not what thou sayest?" While this shows that the Lord wishes us to take into consideration the hearers, we are not to pray to them, but are to turn the thoughts of all toward God, to an appreciation of His Goodness, of His Wisdom, Love and Mercy.

Leaving out all thought of **teaching** at that time, we should seek to direct all in a reverent manner to the Throne of Heavenly Grace, in thought, that they may humble themselves before God. That which Christian people sometimes attempt to do in **prayer** should be done in **preaching.** According to the declaration of the Word, it has not pleased God to save by prayer those who believe, but by preaching. (Romans 10:14; 1 Corinthians 1:21.) This does not mean necessarily public speaking, but includes also more private proclamation of the Truth and also preaching by the printed page. We are to follow the direction of the Word in all ways.

While we thus speak of public prayer, and in respect to the propriety of brevity, and of the examples of Scripture concerning this, we would not give the thought that one should be limited in his private devotions. He who was perfect set us an example of private prayer. Our Lord sometimes prayed all night. But we presume that with the most of us it would be better not to do this; for we would be weaker for service the next day. In our weakness and imperfection we are probably not able to appreciate the peculiar position of our Lord. We would have nothing that we could say to the Lord which would keep us all night in prayer, except that which would be repetition. And our Master said: "Use not vain repetition"—"Your Father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask Him." We are to ask rather for the condition of heart whereby we may be able to receive whatever He shall see fit to send, that we may get a blessing out of each of the Lord's providences.

So, then, summing up the matter, our petitions in public should be modeled considerably after the sample our Lord gave His disciples—a brief expression of earnest desire for the coming of God's Kingdom, an acknowledgment of sin, a request for Divine forgiveness and help and supply of our needs, and a rendering of worship and praise. We think this should be about the range of our private devotions also, as a rule, respecting ourselves. It is eminently appropriate, however, that we remember one another at the Throne of Grace in private, and in a general way in public. But evidently the instruction of Scripture is that we should not seek to use prayer as a means to gain earthly favors, or tell the Lord what we wish done, or to be heard of men, but that we are to put first the spiritual things, the things for which we have been instructed to pray. . . .

The Unspeakable Privilege of Prayer

The Apostle Paul exhorts the saints that they "pray always, with all prayer and supplication in the spirit, watching thereunto with all perseverance." These words do not signify that we should be always upon our knees or continually uttering a prayer. But we should never cease to pray, and our prayers should be **in the spirit**—earnest, sincere. The children of God are not to "say prayers," they are to **pray.** There is much formal prayer—much saying of prayers—which do not get higher than the head of the one who repeats the words. The Scriptures speak of this as drawing near to God with the lips when the heart is far from Him. It would be better that we should not approach the Lord at all than that we should do so in an improper manner.

It is a most wonderful privilege to draw near the great Creator and Lord of Heaven and earth; and we should come in the spirit of reverence and devotion. Our Lord declared that the Father seeketh such to worship Him as worship Him in spirit and in Truth. We must come only in the name of Christ. He is the only Way of approach. And we must come thoughtfully and earnestly. We should not think of uttering a single word that we do not mean and have not thought upon. We believe a great many have done themselves injury by going through a form of words in a mere formalistic manner. This is not prayer. True prayer is the language of the heart. Therefore the greater our earnestness, the more acceptable the prayer will be, and the greater blessing shall we receive. . . .

Perseverance in Prayer Necessary

There is a difference also between prayer and supplication. Prayer would be any petition, great or small; whereas supplication would mean a special desire for a thing—an earnest entreaty. Whether it be ordinary prayer or be supplication—an intense form of prayer—we should always come in the spirit, with appreciation of the fact that we are coming into the presence of the great Jehovah, and that it is a privilege accorded to only a very few at this time.

And we are to "watch thereunto, with all perseverance." If we really believe that the Lord has indicated that we should pray, and that it is His will to give us the things we need, and above all His Holy Spirit, then we should be alert to note when we receive the answer to our petitions. If we pay no attention to our prayers after they are uttered, never look to see whether they are being answered, this would indicate that we have not really appreciated our need. It would seem that this is the reason why God does not answer many of our prayers more quickly. We should learn to watch for the answers to our prayers, and thus learn the lesson of appreciation and gratitude to Him as we realize that He has granted us our request.

We are, then, to pray with **perseverance,** not watching merely for a few hours for the fulfilment, nor merely for a day or a week. The Lord might see best to defer the fulfilment of our petition, either to test our faith or to bring us into a better condition to receive the blessing. Perhaps we have all had these experiences, and were thus more hungry for the answer when it came. We are to be sure that the Lord is never indifferent to the pleading of His children, and will pursue the course which is best for us, just as would a faithful teacher with his pupil, and as would a loving parent with his child. Our Father in Heaven wishes to give us His best things, and will not withhold anything that is really good. (Psalm 84:11.) But He requires sometimes that we shall wait for a considerable time. At other times, there may be a speedy answer to our petitions.

Whether we are on our knees or in the busy walks of life our hearts should go out continually to the Lord for His guidance in all our affairs and experiences, that we may serve Him in a manner that will be pleasing and acceptable to Him, that we may be shielded from temptations that without His aid would be beyond our endurance, and that He will in His own due time deliver us from all evil and imperfection and grant us a place in His Heavenly Kingdom. Dear brethren, let us constantly put into practise the injunction of our Master, "Watch and pray, lest ye **enter into** temptation."—Mark 14:38.

Should We Wrestle in Prayer?

But although the Scriptures enjoin upon us **persistency** in prayer, and the parable of The Importunate Widow also teaches this, nothing in the Word of God, in our judgment, warrants us in doing what some people call "wrestling with God in prayer." We believe that our God is willing to give us the things that are best for us, and anything that God is not willing to give us we should not desire. We should not strive to induce the Lord to do anything that He is unwilling to do, but should wish that only His will be done. At the time when Jacob wrestled with the angel, we would understand that he did the right and proper thing. Any of us in the same position would have done well if we had followed his course. That was a rare occasion. Jacob was returning to his home for the first time since he had fled to Padan-Aram from his brother Esau, and he feared that Esau might still seek his life. And now the Lord had manifested Himself to Jacob in the form of this angel. The angel could have broken away, but he permitted Jacob to get into that earnest attitude where he said: "I will not let thee go unless thou bless me!"

But **we** do not need to wrestle with God for His special blessing. We already have this blessing. We are not servants crying for a crumb. The Lord has put upon us His best robe; He has given us His Holy Spirit. But He has promised us certain things conditional upon our asking, and He wishes us to continue to come to Him in faith, in simple, earnest prayer—not **wrestling** in prayer.

The Kingdom at the Door

The world is full of woe and wretchedness because of sin. And our hearts cry out, How long, O Lord, how long until Thou wilt deliver Thy people and establish righteousness in the earth? So we pray day by day, "Thy Kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth!" Should we grow tired of this? No; for the Lord has bidden us to continue to wish for it, to pray for it.

The Kingdom **will** come! And the Lord wishes us to have this thought—**The Kingdom is coming!** To give up praying would be to give up our faith. Continue to hope, continue to believe, continue to pray without ceasing! Continue to say: "Thy Kingdom come!" Continue to long for the time when that Kingdom will bless all the families of the earth. This is very different from **wrestling,** according to our view of the meaning of that word. This is importunity, this is persistency, this is continuance. And **in everything** we are to give thanks. But we would not want to hasten the Lord's time one minute. Even though we pray, "Thy Kingdom come," this does not mean that we wish to have the Kingdom come before the Father's time. But we whose eyes are anointed know that the time will not tarry long, but that it is nigh.

Whatever may be our natural inclinations as regards constancy and definiteness in prayer, we must take our instructions from the Word of God. We must overcome our natural tendencies along this line. Let us as true, obedient children conform our views and our conduct to the words of counsel which our Father has given us. Let us remember the promise of the Master, "Ask, and ye shall receive, that your joy may be full."—John 16:24.

"Breathe on us, Lord! Thy radiance pour
On all the wonders of the page
Where hidden lies the Heavenly lore
That blessed our youth and guides our age.
Grant **faith,** that treads the stormy deep,
If but Thy voice shall bid it come;
And **zeal,** that climbs the mountain steep,
To seek and bring the wanderer home.
Give **strength,** blest Savior; in Thy might
Illuminate our hearts, and we
Transformed into Thine image bright,
Shall teach and love and live **like Thee!"**

—Z. '16:19-23.

Faith Through Fiery Trials

"That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."—1 Pet. 1:7.

FAITH MAY BE said to have in it the two elements of **intellectual assurance** and **heart-reliance.** Both the head and the heart—the intellect and the affections—are necessary to the faith without which it is impossible to please God. With some, faith is all **emotion**; with others, it is all **intellectuality.** But neither of these elements alone can withstand the fiery tests to which faith is subjected. Both must be **present** and **remain,** if our faith be that which will endure to the end and be found unto praise, honor and glory at the appearing of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

The trial of our faith to which our Lord and the Apostles refer is a trial, not only of our **intellectual knowledge** of Divine Truth, but also of our **heart-reliance upon God.** In both respects, the true child of God will find himself severely tried. Let him see to it that he has a "Thus saith the Lord" for every item of his belief. Let him study the doctrine and get a clear understanding of every element of the Truth. Let him become rooted, grounded, settled and established in the doctrines of God, and give earnest heed lest at any time he let them slip.—Heb. 2:1.

When he has his faith well grounded in the **fundamental principles** of Divine Truth, let every consecrated child of God see to it that he also continue to cultivate heart-reliance in the **"great and precious promises."** St. Peter tells us that a faith which has stood the tests of fiery ordeal and has come off victorious is very precious in the sight of the Heavenly Father. Whenever we pass through a fiery trial and still retain, not only our faith in the doctrines, but also our **confidence in God,** our **reliance in His promises,** our integrity of heart and purpose, and our zeal for Truth and righteousness, **then our characters have grown more Christ-like** and hence more pleasing to God, who subjects us to discipline for this very purpose.

St. Peter intimates in our text that the faith of those called throughout the Gospel Age will receive a severe testing. He says, "That the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honor and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ." In the present time, when gold is comparatively a rare metal, it has a special value. Therefore, the Apostle compares it to the faith of the Little Flock, to whom alone, of all humanity, will be given the glory, honor and immortality promised to those who overcome.

Hence the trial of the faith of this class is very important. None will be admitted to membership in the Body of Christ who has not been tested and proved by the Lord. But let us remember that our testing is not to see whether we are perfect according to the **flesh.** On the contrary, God knows our frame; He remembers that we are dust.—Psa. 103:14.

What God is seeking in us is the development and perfection of faith. We are tested to see whether we believe in Him as a faithful, wise, loving and true God; and in His Son as our Redeemer, who purchased us with His own precious blood, and as our Advocate, who now covers our blemishes, past, present and future, with the Robe of His imputed Righteousness. These are the elements of faith which He will test thoroughly and which must grow stronger as time goes by. Without strong, well-tested faith in God and His promises, we cannot please Him and become members of the Elect Class.

The Purpose for Which Faith Is Tried

The trial of our faith is not left to **chance.** It is supervised by our Lord Jesus Christ Himself, who is represented by the Prophet Malachi as a refiner and purifier of gold and of silver, that He may purify the antitypical House of Levi, and separate the dross from the precious metal. (Mal. 3:3.) In one sense of the word, He came as that refiner at the First Advent. During the entire Gospel Age, He has been doing the refining work in His people, that the offering to the Father might be an acceptable one.

First of all, our Lord laid down His life in **fulfilment** of the **types of the Law,** thus demonstrating His absolute trust, loyalty, and faith in God. The Church of Christ must be similarly tested and proved in respect to their obedience, trust, loyalty to the Father. They must be willing, not only to trust God when things are favorable, but to trust in His providences when they cannot see the outcome. To attain this degree of faith, they must pass through manifold trials and testings, that they may demonstrate their faith and loyalty. . . .

The question naturally arises, Why should God test **faith** rather than **works?** The answer is that all kinds of works are dependent upon the ability of the worker, and that the whole race of Adam has become unable to do perfect works, on account of the fall of their first parents. None can be perfectly just, perfectly wise, perfectly loving; to be so in our present imperfect condition is impossible.

Therefore, in His Wisdom and Love, God avoids making His test along those lines in which we are absolutely incompetent, and makes it along the line of faith—in His Wisdom, His Love and His promises. To doubt any of these would be to weaken the basis of our hope. We realize that we are in a fallen condition, that we are dying like the remainder of the race. We have heard through the Word of God that He has provided a Savior, but we see that things continue much as they were, despite all that God and Christ have done. Our faith, however, assures us that God, who knows the end from the beginning, is working all things according to the counsel of His own will and that in due time He will establish righteousness in the earth.—Eph. 1:11; Psa. 72: 1-7. . . .

Truth and Righteousness Integral Parts of Character

From the standpoint of faith we see that Christ has come into the world and during the Gospel Age has been carrying on the work of selecting the Church, which is His Body, and that from these a light has shone out into the surrounding darkness, which has been more or less dispelled by it. The light of the Holy Spirit, shed abroad by the example of many Christian lives, exerts an influence today, and many have a veneer of politeness which may be mistaken for the fruits of the Spirit of God. But the outward conduct alone is not evidence of acceptable heart condition. God desires that **truth and righteousness shall become integral parts of our characters** and that the principle of Love shall dominate in everything. This development of character we do not find among **all** who profess the name of Christ. . . .

Faith is a quality possessed by all whom God is calling to membership in the Body of Christ, and the appeal of the Scriptures is only to those who have some faith and who are determined to increase it. When we begin our course as Christians, we have comparatively little faith, and it must be developed; our Christian experience is for the purpose of faith development. As St. Peter suggests, our faith, which is on trial, is much more precious than gold, although the gold be tried by fire. The exercise of faith tends to its development, and so our Father gives us numerous trials to test its strength.

The Faith of the Angels Severely Tested

God purposely permits us to be subject to manifold temptations for the testing of our faith, which is necessary because of the outcome of the trial. We may suppose that **prior to the existence of man** the angels had no such trials of faith and patience as the Church has had, for the angels saw God and knew of His works. Nevertheless, God has been pleased to give them a test of faith, which has continued during all of man's experience.

The primary cause of Satan's deflection, which resulted in his rebellion, was that he lost his faith in God. He formed the idea that he could manage the Universe better than could the Almighty, and thought to secure to himself a little corner where he could show how affairs should be carried on. He succeeded in getting control of our first parents, only to find that, instead of bringing a blessing, he had brought upon the human family the curse of death—the penalty of sin—and all the misery and crime now on the pages of history.

Satan's career became a very important test to the angels. Believing that God had all power, they did not understand why He would permit Satan to pursue so evil a course. They would have restrained the Adversary altogether. So when they saw evil going on unrestrained for centuries, some of them also evidently lost their faith. Thus came about the conditions mentioned in the sixth chapter of Genesis, when some of the angels preferred to materialize and live in human conditions. This was in violation of the Divine arrangement, and was the result of their loss of faith in God's Wisdom and Power. They had seen what Satan had done, although he had not succeeded in doing anything great; and their sentiment was, "Apparently God does not control affairs so completely as we have thought."—Gen. 6:1-4; 2 Pet. 2:4, 5; Jude 6, 7.

Thus we see that God tested the faith of the holy angels, especially when we understand that the evil conditions prevailing before the flood have continued to some extent. The holy angels had occasion to doubt, to fear respecting God's Wisdom, Love and Power. Thus they were all thoroughly tested—more so than humanity; for they saw all that there was to be seen. We admit that there are a great many things that we do not know and cannot see, but the angels have apparently a much wider scope of knowledge. Thus the test of their faith was much greater than is ours.

God tested the faith of the angels because He wished to know which of them had that absolute confidence which would enable them to trust Him, whether it seemed that He **had** or had **not** the power to control affairs. The lesson of the exceeding sinfulness of sin was both wise and necessary. Had the fall of man resulted in the everlasting torture of even a small proportion of the human family, we could not think that God was either wise or just in permitting this test to come upon His creatures.

For more than four thousand years God permitted mankind to go down into death. Then came a manifestation of His Love when He provided for their redemption; and a still further manifestation of His Power will be given in the next Age, when they will be raised from the dead. Furthermore, in the Bride class He is making a special illustration, both to angels and to men, of His Love for those who manifest heart-loyalty to Him, and of His willingness to lift those faithful few far above the angels and even to make them "partakers of the Divine nature." We see, then, that in God's dealings with the angels He had respect to their **faith.**

Faith Proportionate to Knowledge of God's Character

The Scriptures say that "without **faith** it is **impossible** to please God." (Heb. 11:6.) If one lose his faith, there is no telling whither he may wander. The Apostle Peter's argument is that this special class who are being selected for exaltation to the Divine nature, must expect to have their faith tested, and that this testing is most important from the Divine point of view. If they have faith, it will control all of their affairs.—Compare Heb. 11:1, 6.

Our faith will be in proportion to our knowledge of the character of God. We shall find, upon observation, that **in proportion to our faith we can endure hardness** as good soldiers of Jesus Christ. Since our test is for so brief a time—a few years—it must of necessity be a very severe, a crucial one. God is subjecting our faith to a great heat in order to separate the dross. If we had not the faith, we might fear to take the steps which would bring us into this crucial position. Fear would lead us to decline to take the course that God indicates to be His will. Without faith we would shrink from the fiery trials, the heated furnace. If we have not the faith to stand the trials, then we are not of the kind for whom God is at the present time looking.

If we appreciate this matter, we shall see that "without faith it is impossible to please God"; and that confidence in Him will lead us to weigh His words of precious promise. These promises will make clear to us the reason why these testings are upon us, and will enable us to **appreciate** our testings as marks of His **love** for us. The Lord would have us be "a peculiar people," tried and tested, "zealous of good works," a people for a purpose; and so He develops us through suffering.

When the world is on trial during the Millennial Age, knowledge will have come in, and there will be **less opportunity** for the exercise of faith. Mankind will be in much the same condition as that in which the angels now are. For a thousand years, the world will be assisted upward, and at the same time they will have opportunities of cultivating faith —heart-reliance—in God. What **we** now see by **faith, they** will actually **know**—that the permission of sin has been working out a great Divine test for both men and angels. Thus gradually, throughout the thousand years, their faith will be established in practically the same way that the faith of the angels is now being established. They will **see** and will walk by **sight,** while we **believe** the promises and so walk by **faith.**

There is a difference between **intellectual belief** and **heart-reliance.** The person who knows God **best** will trust Him **most.** Our Lord Jesus in His glorified position trusts the Father most perfectly at all times. But with us, whose trust is imperfect, it is different. Not until the First Resurrection shall we have perfect trust. The greater the knowledge of God's character, the greater will be the heart-reliance upon Him.

During the Millennium, as **intellectual belief** gives place to **knowledge,** the heart-reliance of those who are loyal to the principles of righteousness will increase proportionately. It will **always** be in order to trust in God. The Great Creator is the Great Upholder of the Universe; and all of His creatures will ever be recipients of His bounty. If we understand the Scriptures, the only ones who will have deathlessness will be the Lord Jesus and the Church, which is His Body. (1 Cor. 15:53.) All others will have dependent lives, and so will be **objects of Divine care.** In order to have everlasting life, they will need to have a heart-reliance upon their Creator. The more they learn of the unchangeableness of the Divine promises and character, the greater will be their trust.

The faith of the Church will be of a higher character than is that of the angels or than will be that of the world restored. The faith of the Church will have been wrought out amidst the darkness and obscurity of this Age, which are being permitted for the very purpose of developing that faith; for the Church is called to occupy a place much higher than that of angels or men—called to be partakers of the Divine nature.—2 Pet. 1:3, 4.

When, during the Millenial Age, the world shall have learned their lessons along the lines of knowledge, God does not purpose to receive them everlastingly without a thorough test of their heart-reliance. In Rev. 20:3, 7-10, we read that at the close of the thousand years, Satan shall be loosed for a little season. Mankind will then **know** what is right and what is wrong, for the principles of righteousness will have been implanted in their hearts. The experience with Satan will be a test of heart-reliance, of loyalty, in that God will apparently not be in control.

Then all those not in the fullest sympathy with God and His Divine Plan will be misled by this test of faith. Thus they will demonstrate their true character. Those who prove disobedient will be destroyed in the Second Death. God tells us that in the consummation every knee shall bow and every tongue confess to the glory of His Name, and that every creature in Heaven and in earth shall give honor and praise to the Son.—Rev. 5:13; Z. '12: 320-323.

If you are hypercritical and wish to measure others up to the full standard of perfection, you are thus recognizing a high standard, and that recognition on your part will make it proper for the Lord to measure you by that high standard. If we could but remember this—that the merciful will obtain mercy—how glad we all would be to be extremely merciful to others, extremely lenient in our judgments and reproofs, hoping that the Lord would be correspondingly lenient with us!—James 2:13.

The Lord is not in this establishing a low standard, and wishing His people to think lightly of their own weaknesses and failures, and those of others. He is, on the contrary, setting up a high standard of love, sympathy and kindness. Love is the principal thing, in God's sight. Whoever, therefore, has love and sympathy most highly developed, the Lord may well esteem as highly developed along the lines most essential in His sight, most essential for a place in His Mediatorial Kingdom.—Z. '13:298.

Our Lord's Knowledge of His Pre-existence

"By His Knowledge shall My righteous Servant justify many: for He shall bear their iniquities."—Isa. 53:11.

THIS STATEMENT implies that our Lord's knowledge had some very important relationship to His work. Without this knowledge, although He had made His consecration, He might not have been able to withstand the attacks of Satan, and the misinterpretations of the Scriptures which the Adversary used to try to turn Him aside from that consecration. The knowledge which our Lord had at thirty years of age, a perfect man, was that of His miraculous birth, that in some manner Jehovah was His Father, and that in some manner He was to fulfil the Old Testament Scriptures. This was information enough to lead Him up to the point of consecration. With the larger knowledge which came to Him later, came testings to prove His loyalty. From the beginning He was loyal in His intention and thought; but we may infer from the Scriptures that there was, at least, a **possibility** that without the knowledge which He had, He might not have been competent to meet the besetments of the way.

This experience is similar to our own. When we consecrate ourselves, we have a sufficiency of knowledge for that step. As we proceed, we are guided into the knowledge of the Truth, which constitutes part of the grace of God to assist us in making our calling and election sure. As the Lord said, "The Holy Spirit will guide you into all truth and will show you things to come." (John 16:13.) So apparently the Holy Spirit guided Jesus Himself and showed Him both of the future and of the past—made the Plan of God as plain to Him as it now is to us. He understood it better, however, because His mind was perfect, while our minds are imperfect.

His Life Principle Transferred to a Lower Plane

When considering the question as to how and when our Lord Jesus, the **Man** Christ Jesus, came to an appreciation of His pre-human condition, we struggle with a question respecting which we have no direct revelation. We are, therefore, left to deductions, and different minds might draw different deductions from the facts and circumstances of the narrative. Of one thing we are assured, namely, that during our Lord's ministry He had a clear knowledge of the heavenly things, as His words indicate. He said to Nicodemus, "If I have told you earthly things, and ye believe not, how shall you believe if I tell you of heavenly things?" (John 3:12.) Again, He said to His disciples, "What and if ye shall see the Son of Man ascend up where He was before?" (John 6:62.) On the night of His betrayal He said to the Heavenly Father, "Glorify Thou Me with Thine own self, with the glory which I had with Thee before the world was" (John 17:5), showing that He had knowledge of His pre-human existence. We question then, How and when did He obtain this knowledge?

Reasoning on this subject we see in the Scriptures nothing that says that the Logos, who was with the Father from the beginning, entered into the body of Jesus, and thus used the flesh of Jesus as a veil or covering. On the contrary, the record is that the Logos was **made flesh,** not that He got into flesh. Hence, we disagree with the theory of the incarnation; it is from a deranged theology. The Bible tells us that the Logos was made flesh and that He became the Man Christ Jesus, that He humbled Himself and took a bondman's form and was found in fashion as a man. (Phil. 2:5-8.) The Bible says that He laid aside the dignity and honor which He once had; that He became poor—not that He posed as poor while in the flesh, but that He who was rich became poor for our sakes. (2 Cor. 8:9.) The necessity of this procedure we see in the Bible arrangement that, "Since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection of the dead." (1 Cor. 15:21.) He came to be a corresponding price for the first man's life and life-rights.

From these Scriptures we are led to the conclusion that the spark of life previously vivifying the Logos was transferred from the spirit plane to the human plane—from the higher plane or nature to a lower plane or nature. This glorious being was begotten of the Holy Spirit and ultimately born a human being. The same spark of life, we believe, was maintained. The very fact that His spark of life could not come from the condemned Adamic race, assures us that the same spark of life was transferred to the womb of the Virgin Mary. This child that was born, then, was born like other human children, only that He was perfect, because of the perfect germ of life from which He was developed. He would certainly be a very peculiar boy, and wiser than other boys. We read further that he not only grew in stature, but in wisdom and in favor with God and man. (Luke 2:52.) Humanity perceived that He was different from others. The whole matter was pleasing to God, to whom Jesus became more and more pleasing as He neared maturity.

Development of His Sense of Responsibility

When He was twelve, Jesus had, apparently, much knowledge. He knew, probably from His mother, that He was miraculously born and that He was different from others. He had also His mother's explanation that He was to be the "Son of the Highest" and fulfil the predictions respecting the Messiah. (Luke 1:32, 33, 55.) At this time He began to inquire—not by way of showing His precocity, but in sincerity and in truth—whether or not this was the time when He should begin His ministry. He began to consider at what time a man should become a priest—thinking of His responsibilities **as a priest.** The doctors of the Law must have marveled that a child of twelve should think of such questions. We may suppose that a dialogue took place, the results of which satisfied His mind that this was not the time when He should begin His ministry. He did not have this knowledge by any inductive process, but obtained it by inquiry of the Scriptures and of those who were best versed in the Scriptures. The decision was that there was nothing for Him to do until He was thirty years of age.

Then we read that He returned home with His mother and her husband Joseph, and was subject to them. He did not then enter upon His work of ministry. He treated Himself as a minor, subject to those who had charge over Him. This was His condition until He came to John at Jordan. There is not a suggestion anywhere that He had previously manifested any teaching powers. He was a learner, not a teacher. Every Sabbath day He was in the synagogue to hear the Word of God read, to meditate upon it and to know the Divine requirements respecting Messiah and the wonderful things prophesied of Him. Evidently he was perplexed in the same manner that the Jewish nation was. But He had a different cast of mind from theirs. They wondered and queried as to His knowledge.

His Knowledge at the Age of Thirty

At thirty years of age our Lord certainly must have had much knowledge which Adam did not possess when he was on trial. Jesus had a knowledge of what sin is and what the penalty for sin is; of the fact that God arranged for the redemption of mankind, to be accomplished through the great Mediator of the New Covenant—a Savior, a Redeemer, a Deliverer. He knew of the Divine Law written in the Decalogue; of the inability of others to keep the Law and of His ability to keep it. His mother had told Him of His miraculous birth, of the message that had come through Gabriel and of the prophecies of Anna and Simeon. This amount of knowledge would be very valuable to Him. He had also in mind the prophecy respecting the future of the great Messiah that was to come and deliver the world.

But what He evidently lacked was the knowledge of the deeper things of the Scriptures. He evidently found perplexities in the Bible. While He had not received the Holy Spirit, yet He was much better qualified to understand the Scriptures than was the fallen race. But the Apostle says that "the natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God . . . because they are spiritually discerned." (1 Cor. 2:14.) Jesus had not been begotten of the Holy Spirit, therefore He did not have the understanding of the prophecies and of the types of the law.

But our Lord did not begin to teach until after He was anointed, when He invited His disciples to join Him. They were to proclaim the message without understanding the matter at all, that the Kingdom of Heaven was at hand and that Israel should try to get near to God, to be prepared for this Kingdom when it should be revealed. Our Lord put His power upon them so that they cast out demons; for they had no power of the Holy Spirit until after Pentecost.

Similarly, now we see that no one is competent to be a teacher in the Church of Christ as an Elder except He be fully consecrated, except he come under the terms and conditions necessary to the begetting of the Holy Spirit. Apparently the people knew of our Lord's consecration. When our Lord had received the begetting of the Holy Spirit at His consecration at Jordan, John the Baptist both saw the descent of the Holy Spirit and heard Jehovah's testimony, and afterward said that he "saw and bare record." If the multitude had seen and heard, he would not have needed to bear record that Jesus was the anointed of God.—John 1:32-34.

His Illumination of Mind After Spirit-Begetting

After His baptism Jesus Himself became conscious of some great change in His own condition and in His relationship to the Father and to spiritual things; for we read that at the time when John saw the Holy Spirit descend upon Him, "the heavens were opened unto Him." (Matt. 3:16.) By "heavens" here is meant, not that Jesus was given a telescopic view of things beyond the sky, but that the higher things were opened to Him—the things which as a natural man He could not receive. No matter how perfect a man may be, he cannot receive spiritual things. As St. Paul says, "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God: for they are foolishness [meaningless] unto him: neither can he know them, because they are spiritually discerned."—1 Cor. 2:14.

We assume that at the very moment when our Lord received the Holy Spirit an impression was made upon the convolutions of His brain which would give Him those very recollections of His prehuman condition which otherwise the natural brain could not have. In the natural man, every impression of the mind is recorded in the convolutions of the brain. We can see how the convolutions of our Lord's brain could have been so impressed that they would reproduce the experiences, the knowledge and the very thoughts which He had prior to His being made flesh. We know that that very moment marked the time of our Lord's spirit begetting, and we believe that He then received special knowledge of heavenly things.

Instead of beginning the ministry for which He had prepared for thirty years, He turned aside into the wilderness and studied the Scriptures for forty days. He had already had many times forty days to think over these Scriptures, and if He had had the same power of understanding before His consecration that He afterwards had, He would not have needed those forty days for study, but would have given them for service in His ministry. Very evidently, then, all the years of His life on the human plane had brought Him no such perception as He now had through this glow and illumination of mind, received when He came up out of the water. He began to have the full scope and appreciation of the mission upon which He had entered, and everything written in the Scriptures respecting Messiah.

As He now studied the Law and the Prophets, He saw the terms of the Covenant of sacrifice in the light of this illumination; He saw the hitherto hidden meaning of the various types. He began to see that if Messiah would reign it would be by a manifestation of loyalty to God and to righteousness. As soon as He was illuminated, He saw the things pertaining to the suffering through which He afterwards learned obedience in the fullest sense possible. Thus He received the illumination which was so powerful to Him—just as it is a great illumination for us to see the terms and conditions of our calling—that we must walk in His steps if we would reign with Him. The Scriptures act as an enlightening power to those who are taught of God. Only those begotten of the Spirit can understand the real depth of God's Word.

In bewilderment our Lord saw the meaning of the Atonement Day sacrifices and of all the things written in the Book—the things which He had covenanted to do when He entered into consecration. He had already pledged Himself to do "everything written in the Book." But now He was finding out what this really meant—**death**, even the **death of the cross!**

His Further Illumination After Spirit-Birth

We see that when our Lord was raised from the dead a spirit being an equally miraculous work must have taken place: for again He received a change of nature. The One that was raised from the dead was the Spirit-begotten New Creature, who had all the record of His previous experiences, on both the spirit and the human plane.

How, then, did the Father raise our Lord from the dead a spirit being, and how could this spirit being have any knowledge of the things experienced in the flesh and also of the things of His previous existence before He was made flesh? We answer that this is impossible to understand, except that it is done by Divine Power. Whatever may have been the operation, after reaching the spirit plane His mind must have been stamped by Divine Power with recollections of both the earthly and the pre-human experiences. Otherwise all of our Lord's human and pre-human experiences would be valueless.

We see this also respecting the Church. We also are embryo spirit beings. And when we shall be raised in His likeness in the resurrection, we shall not have our fleshly brains for recollection, and we therefore shall be dependent upon the Divine Power for the memory of all the experiences of the present time. So when we read, "So also is the resurrection of the dead; it is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in dishonor, it is raised in glory; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body" (1 Cor. 15:42-44), we have this thought, that the Divine Power will impress this spirit body with the knowledge of all the blessed experiences of the present time, so that these experiences shall not be fruitless, but profitable to us, making us better qualified and more able for the Divine service, as well as for the carrying on of the work of the New Covenant.

Our Lord "The Brightness of Jehovah's Glory"

If our Lord had not been found perfect, loyal, faithful, in His pre-human condition, He would never have had the privilege of becoming a man in order to redeem man. He never showed any defects of character to be rectified, therefore, He did not need any of the experiences which aid in making character. His experiences as a man with adverse conditions were given to test His loyalty and obedience to the utmost.

Our Lord was faithful under all the favorable conditions of His pre-existent condition; He was faithful as a man; and having been glorified to the Divine nature He is still faithful. We may conclude, therefore, that His experiences on these three planes have all co-operated to demonstrate His character to the very highest degree—"the express image" of Jehovah.—Heb. 1:3; Z. '13:8-10.

◆

Those who pray for opportunities to serve the Lord and His cause and who watch for the fulfilment of their prayers in the open doors of opportunity will surely have them.—Z. '11:412.

◆

"As He was, so are we in this world"—ostracized, misunderstood, reproved, slandered. Only those who can stand such an experience can be winners of the crown.—Z. '14:91.

◆

We should bear in mind that whoever speaks the words of the Lord with his mouth, should uphold it in his every act, word, thought, in private life as well as in public.—Z. '12:50.

◆

Even in this present life how much the Lord grants us to enjoy: our enjoyment will be proportionate to our loyalty of spirit in sacrificing. If we love much, and are prompt and liberal in our sacrificing, we will in turn be loved much by the Lord, be blessed and comforted, as he has stipulated, an hundred-fold more than all our distresses.—Z. '06:271.

◆

All who are the Lord's people are to be specially on guard that, whatever others may do in the way of injuring, scandalizing, wounding, stumbling, causing trouble now, they must refrain from this, and remember that they are the followers of the meek and lowly One who did harm to none, but on the contrary laid down his life in the interests of others.—Z. '06:188.

◆

We appreciate, as the Lord does, positiveness of character, strength of character, fixity of purpose, even though at times these qualities of character may cause some trouble.—Z. '16:221.

◆

To be honored with a knowledge of the divine will and plan is a great boon, a great blessing; but it brings a great responsibility: "to whom much is given of him shall much be required."—Z. '06:95.

◆

Wherever perfect love has not been attained the "fire" of this day, the siftings of this day, will manifest it—the Lord will separate the deficient ones. This may cause us sorrow, as earthly ties are severed and fond hopes blighted; nevertheless the Lord's message to us on the subject is figuratively represented in the command which he gave to Aaron and his sons, when two of the under-priesthood perished because they offered strange fire before the Lord which he had not commanded them. (Lev. 10:1.) Moses as the Lord's mouthpiece declared that the survivors in the priesthood must make no mourning or lamentation for those whom the Lord had cut off. To have done so would have implied disloyalty to the Lord and a failure to appreciate his wisdom and justice and love in the matter.—Lev. 10:6; Z. '06:120.

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Old Corn Gems

NUMBER SEVENTY

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KERNELS KERNELS KERNELS

The very noblest of Christians have suffered more as they progressed. Thus it was with our Lord. He suffered most of all at the end of his career.—Z. '11:28.

◆

The spirit of a sound mind makes one's judgment clearer, truer, more trustworthy than before, for it impels him to accept the instructions of the Word of God in respect to what he should and should not do, and to reject his own faulty judgment. The meek will He guide in judgment. Whatever may be the imperfection of mind and body resulting from the fall, those who receive the spirit of a sound mind are thereby made purer, kinder, gentler, less selfish and more thoughtful in regard to others. —Z. '12:281.

◆

If the Lord's grace is proportionate to our trials let us receive with rejoicing all the trials he may send that we may have the more of his grace! —Z. '08:174.

◆

While there are clear indications that some of the living members of the body will witness the gathering of the storm and share in some of the troubles it will bring, there are also indications that none of these will pass entirely through it, nor even far into it. The Master's words, "Watch, that ye may be accounted **worthy to escape** those things that shall come to pass" (Luke 21:36), seem to indicate this. And yet we know that we are already passing through the beginning of these troubles (the troubles upon the nominal Church incident to its testing), and that we are escaping, while many on every hand are falling into error and infidelity. We escape, not by being taken from the scene of trouble, but by being supported, strengthened and kept in the very midst of it all by the Word of the Lord, our shield and buckler. (Psa. 91:4.) While admitting that in like manner some members of the body might remain to the very end of the time of trouble, and pass through it all, and yet **thus escape** all the trouble coming, it is nevertheless clear, we think, that all the members of the body will be fully delivered—exalted to the glorious condition—before the severest features of the trouble come,—after the body is complete and the door shut.—C. 228, 229.

◆

The faithful of the Church are promised deliverance before the full force of the storm breaks.—D. 540.

◆

Those who have two talents and use them faithfully receive the same commendation as the one who has five talents and uses the five.—Z. '14:23.

◆

The vow of the Christian in response to the Apostle's appeal, "Present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable to God, which is your reasonable service," is all-comprehensive. In it he gives away every right, every liberty, every choice, and agrees with the Lord that his own will shall be dead and the divine will accepted in every affair of life and in respect to all his words and thoughts and doings. Thus we see that a Christian, as the Apostle has expressed it, is a bond-slave in the most absolute sense. No slave could have less rights, less freedom, since these are pledged to the extent of ability to bring even the very thoughts of their hearts into conformity to the will of their Master.—Z. '08:317.

◆

It is not sufficient that we consecrate our lives. We must show our loyalty and faithfulness by laying them down, by taking up the cross, by drinking of His cup, by being immersed into His death. Only these will share Messiah's Throne of Glory. "If we suffer with Him, we shall also reign with Him; if we be dead with Him, we shall also live with Him." —Z. '13:46.

◆

"Who is sufficient for these things?" "Who shall be able to stand?" (2 Cor. 2:16; Mal. 3:2, 3; Rev. 6:17.) None but the faithful shall be able to stand, because the Lord purposely will make the test so severe as to sift and shake out all others. (2 Thes. 2:11.) The faithful are those who are trusting in Jesus for all, and whose will is the will of their God, who are so consecrated to his will that they rejoice to serve him with every talent possessed.—Z. '91:3.

◆

Whenever we hear those professing the new life and large attainments of grace speaking evil of their brethren, we are to remember the word of the Lord, that revilers shall have no part in the Kingdom of God; we are to remember that it is written of our Lord that "when he was reviled he reviled not again"; we are to remember that evil speaking is classed by the Apostle as amongst the works of the flesh and of the devil, and the conduct of Michael, the archangel, is held up before us as a shining example of propriety, in that he did not bring a railing accusation against Satan, but merely said, "The Lord rebuke thee"; we are to remember too the Apostle's specific declaration, that evil speaking against others is a part of the filth of the flesh from which we, as the Lord's people, must be cleansed if we would be acceptable to him through Jesus Christ our Lord; and that revilers "shall not inherit the Kingdom of God."—1 Cor. 6:10; Z. '02:311.

◆

"Let brotherly love continue." Let us seek to lay down our lives for the brethren. We cannot serve the Lord directly, but can serve Him indirectly, by serving the brethren and by manifesting our patience and sympathy and love for them.—Z. '13:382.

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OLD CORN GEMS

NUMBER SEVENTY

"And they did eat of the OLD CORN of the land on the morrow after the Passover . . . and the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the OLD CORN of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year." Joshua 5:11-12.

A SAFE RULE

"WHERE A BROTHER GIVES AN INTERPRETATION OF A SCRIPTURE WHICH DIFFERS FROM THAT GIVEN BY BROTHER RUSSELL, AND BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION SEEMS REASONABLE AND IN HARMONY WITH THE PLAN OF GOD, THEN WE BELIEVE IT A SAFE RULE TO FOLLOW BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION, FOR THE REASON THAT HE IS THE SERVANT OF THE CHURCH, SO CONSTITUTED BY THE LORD FOR THE LAODICEAN PERIOD; AND THEREFORE WE SHOULD EXPECT THE LORD TO TEACH US THROUGH HIM. WHERE THERE ARISES A DOUBT IN THE MIND AS TO WHICH INTERPRETATION IS CORRECT, THEN IT IS ALWAYS SAFER TO RESOLVE THAT DOUBT IN FAVOR OF BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION. WE BELIEVE SUCH TO BE IN HARMONY WITH THE LORD'S WILL." Z. '18:51.

Washing One Another's Feet

John 13:1-14.

Golden Text:—"By love serve one another."—Gal. 5:13.

THE thirteenth of Nisan apparently was spent by our Lord in quiet retirement, and the evening following, beginning the fourteenth, was the time appointed for the celebration of the Passover Supper in the upper room. Some of the apostles had, by the Lord's instruction, made ready beforehand; and now, as they assembled without a host to appoint them their places at the Supper, a discussion as to their prominence and their rights to the most honorable places, nearest to the Master, is not surprising. Our Lord twice before had rebuked them on this very line, assuring them that unless they cultivated and attained a spirit of meekness like little children they could have no part in the Kingdom. And only a week before, while en route to Jerusalem, James and John had made the request that in the Kingdom, when established, they might sit the one on the right hand and the other on the left hand of the Master, in closest proximity to his person. It was this spirit that controlled on this occasion, and led up to our Lord's washing of the disciples' feet as a lesson of humility and willingness to serve one another even in the humblest capacity.

Selfishness Even in Love

Nor are we to think of the apostles as each striving for the highest position merely from a selfish standpoint. Rather we should suppose that Peter, James and John, whom the Lord had in various ways specially favored in times past and who seemed to be specially close to him, loved the positions nearest his person, not merely because of the honor thus implied, but largely because of their love and esteem for the Master himself, and perhaps with the feeling that they appreciated this privilege more than some others could appreciate the same. Indeed we may suppose that a considerable number of the other apostles strove on their behalf, insisting that they should have the most honorable position. But however we view the matter, it is evident that a wrong spirit had been engendered, one very inappropriate to the occasion.

It is difficult for us to gage our own hearts thoroughly and hence we should use great charity in measuring the hearts and intentions of others, and should err rather on the side of too great sympathy and leniency than on the side of too strong condemnation. Doubtless had the apostles been inquired of respecting the matter they would have denied any elements of selfishness in their motives and conduct, and would have thought and spoken only of their zeal for the Lord and desire to be near him. This illustrates to us, what the Scriptures declare, that the human heart is exceedingly deceitful—that it needs scrutinizing carefully lest, under the cloak of something good, it might harbor qualities which without that cloak we would despise or spurn. . . .

The first verse of our lesson calls attention to our Lord's love as the basis of all his dealings with "his own." Because of his love he laid aside his glory and became a man; because of his love he devoted himself as the man Christ Jesus; because of his love he was now anxious to help his dear disciples over a difficulty which, if not conquered, would hinder their usefulness as his followers both in the present and future. This love not only led our Lord to administer the reproof necessary, but led him to do it in the wisest and best and kindest manner. His example in this respect should be observed and copied by all his followers, especially those who in any public capacity or service are his representatives in the Church.

Had our Lord and his disciples been the guests of some host on this occasion, it would have been considered the duty of the host to have sent some menial to wash their feet. . . . As the Lord's company were not guests, but merely had the use of the room, no servant appeared to wash their feet, and it would have been properly the duty and custom for one of the number to have performed the menial service for the others. As we have just seen, however, the spirit of rivalry was warm in their hearts, and no one volunteered to render the service, nor had any one the right to demand it in a company in which the Lord had made no special rank and appointed none as menials. This, however, rightly understood and appreciated, would have left the greater opportunity for some of them to have volunteered this service to the others. What an opportunity they all lost!

A Favorable Opportunity Lost

Our Lord apparently let the matter go to the full limit to see whether or not any of them would improve the opportunity and make himself servant of all: he waited until the supper was being served (not ended, as in our common version); then arising from the table he laid aside his outer garment or mantle and took a towel and girded himself. We can well imagine the consternation of the apostles as they watched this procedure, and then saw the Lord go from the feet of one and another as they protruded from the couches on which they reclined. . . .

Apparently the apostles were so astonished at our Lord's procedure, and so felt the condemnation which his course implied, that they knew not what to say, and so silence reigned until it came Peter's turn. Peter had a peculiar combination of character, part of which was extremely good. He objected to having his feet washed by the Lord, saying, "Dost thou wash my feet?—It is not appropriate, Lord, that one so great as you should serve a person of my standing, a poor fisherman." But our Lord answered that although Peter did not discern the full meaning of the matter, he would explain to him later when he had finished the washing of all. Peter's second remark was less praiseworthy than his first. He said, "Thou shalt never wash my feet."

It was hard for Peter to realize that he was the disciple and the Lord was the Teacher,—that it was for him to obey and not to dictate; but Jesus' answer, "If I wash thee not, thou hast no part with me," at once brought out the better side of Peter's impulsive nature. If his washing had anything to do with his nearness to the Master and his relationship to him, then he wanted it. Going even to the other extreme again, fearing to leave matters in the Lord's care, he cried, "Lord, not my feet only, but also my hands and my head." There is a lesson for us in this matter: We are not to dictate to the Lord, not to attempt to be wise or good or obedient in ways that he has not directed. This is a hard lesson for some dispositions to learn,—continually they want to do more than is written in the Scriptures. Such a course indicates either a lack of reverence for the Lord and his Word and the wisdom thereof, or else a too great self-confidence, too much self-esteem. A humble and trustful heart should learn to say, Thy will, O, Lord, thy way and in thy time—"Thy will, not mine be done."

Washing the Feet of the Bathed

Our Lord's answer in our common version is somewhat obscure; the revised version is better—he that is bathed needeth not save to wash his feet to be clean every whit. Properly they had all bathed in accordance with the Jewish requirement of the putting away of all filth at the beginning of the Passover season. Our Lord's intimation, then, signified that having bathed they merely now needed the rinsing of their feet, the cleansing of the members that had come in contact with the earth. Our Lord added, referring to Judas, "Ye are clean, but not all." This expression shows us clearly that he had in mind a higher cleansing, of which this washing of their feet and their previous bath were but figures. . . . There was one in the number whose heart was not clean. Our Lord did not pass him by, but washed the feet of Judas with the rest, knowing the while of his perfidy, and that he had already bargained with the chief priests, and was merely awaiting the opportune moment for the carrying out of his malevolent scheme.

Our Lord's words, although not understood by the rest, must have been appreciated by Judas, as were also his subsequent words recorded in verses 18, 26, 27, 28. Our Lord went so far as to quote the very prophecy which marked Judas and his disloyalty, his violation of even the common hospitality. None of these things moved Judas; none of these things appealed to his heart in such a manner as to change his course. We have thus strong evidence of the wilful intention which marked his crime and enforced the meaning of our Lord's words when he called him the "son of perdition," and declared that it would have been better for him that he had never been born. The quotation from the Psalm was, "He that eateth bread with me hath lifted up his heel against me."

Patience to Its Limit

We may be sure that our Lord's conduct in dealing with Judas is not only a proper outline of what our conduct should be to any of a similar class, but additionally we should note the lesson that the Lord is long suffering toward all who become his disciples, not willing that any should perish, but disposed to do for them until the very last, and to bring to their attention the error of their ways repeatedly, in hope that thus they may be turned therefrom. The latter lesson has associated with it the thought that those who have received the Truth, and who in spite of all the favors connected therewith encourage and develop in themselves the spirit of selfishness, are apt to become so hardened, so calloused, that not even the Master's reproofs and the words of the Scriptures will influence them. This reminds us of the Apostle's words, "It is impossible to renew them again unto repentance"—to a proper course—if once the Spirit of the Lord has been fully subjected to the spirit of selfishness in their hearts.

In harmony with what he told Peter—that he should know later on the significance of the washing—our Lord explained the matter after he had gone the rounds of all the apostles. He said, "Know [understand] ye what I have done to you? Ye call me Master and Lord, and ye say well; for so I am. If I then, your Lord and Master, have washed your feet, ye ought also to wash one another's feet."

The Meaning of the Lord's Action

Here we have the entire lesson explained. In their fear to be the least, all the disciples had shunned the opportunity of service for the Master and for each other. Our Lord, their acknowledged Head and Master, the Messiah, had humbled himself to serve them all, and had thus rebuked their inhumility, and at the same time set them an example that would apply to every affair of life, namely, that they should be glad to serve one another on every proper occasion, in the high things or in the common affairs of life. This washing of one another's feet we may readily see applies to any and every humble service of life, any and every kindness, though specially to those services and kindnesses which would be along the lines of spiritual assistances and comfort. . . .

How many blessed opportunities we have for comforting, refreshing, consoling one another and assisting one another in some of the humblest affairs of life, or in respect to some of the unpleasant duties, experiences or trials of life. As our Golden Text expresses it, we are in love to serve one another and not through formality. Any service done or attempted to be done in love, with the desire to do good to one of the Lord's people, we may be sure has the divine approval and blessing. Let us lose no opportunities of this kind; let us remember the Master's example; let us, like our Master, not merely assume humility or pretend it, but actually have that humility which will permit us to do kindness and services to all with whom we come in contact, and proportionately enjoy this privilege as we find the needy ones to be members of the Lord's body—the Church.

As our Lord said to the disciples, "He that is bathed need not save to wash his feet," even so we may realize that all who are justified and consecrated members of his body have already had the bath, the washing of regeneration, and are already clean through the word spoken unto them. (John 15:3.) Nevertheless, although thus cleansed and sanctified, so long as we are in contact with the world we are liable to a certain degree of earthly defilement, and it especially behooves each one not only to look out for himself but to help one another to get rid of earthly defilements, thus serving his brethren, helping them in the weaknesses, trials and imperfections of the flesh, assisting them to become overcomers. In these respects he is co-operating in the great work of washing the saint's feet, cleansing from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, and perfecting holiness in the reverence of the Lord.—2 Cor. 7:1; Z. '05:118-121.

"Hold Fast That Which Is Good"

1 Thessalonians 5:14-22.

ALTHOUGH addressed to the saints at Thessalonica, these noble words have been a source of strength, encouragement and discipline to the faithful in Christ Jesus from their writing to the present time. No child of God can afford to ignore nor to neglect these words of divine counsel, and in proportion as each of us gives heed to them our lives will surely be the more Christ-like, and we will thus be the more pleasing to the Lord. . . . Let us take up these apostolic injunctions seriatim.

Not the elders alone are exhorted by the Apostle, as though they were a separate class, exercising control and treating the brethren as their wards; he addresses the "brethren"—the entire Church, including the sisters also. But this does not signify that the counsel would not apply specially to the elders; because they were selected as amongst the brethren most advanced in Christian doctrine and practice, and as the representatives of the Church, to specially look after the interests of the Lord's flock. These apostolic words apply to each member of the flock in proportion to his capacity and ability, but would naturally come with special force to the elders who, under God's providence, had the oversight of his Church, "to feed the flock." (Acts 20:28.) While, therefore, all the brethren are to see to the carrying out of the injunctions here given, the elders in every Church should feel a special responsibility respecting them —a responsibility derived from the position they occupy as representatives of the Church,—its standard-bearers.

The unruly are here contrasted with the feeble-minded or faint-hearted and the weak. The divine arrangement is full of order as well as full of liberty; and, rightly understood, liberty can best be conserved by order; and order best be maintained through a reasonable recognition of personal liberty. The mistake frequently made, not only by earthly law-givers and disciplinarians, but also in the Church of Christ, is along the line of **extremes,** either in one or the other of these directions. Some misunderstand liberty to mean lawlessness, disorder, unruliness. Others with equally good intentions, no doubt, are disposed to carry order and obedience to rules to such an extent as to dwarf the individual liberties of the flock. Great grace is needed along this line, to prevent friction amongst the Lord's people—to preserve the unity of the spirit in the bonds of love and peace. . . .

"Be Patient Toward All"

The Scriptures repeatedly admonish us, "Ye have need of patience," and day by day the advanced children of the Lord realize the truthfulness of this, and come to appreciate patience as one of the chief Christian graces. (1) Growth in knowledge helps us to grow in this grace of patience, for as we appreciate more and more the heavenly Father's patience with us it helps us to apply the same principle toward others. (2) As we come to realize the great disaster that is upon our race as a whole—our fallen condition and how the fall has affected some more in one manner and others more in another—some chiefly mentally, some chiefly physically, and some chiefly morally, it enlarges our sympathy toward our fellow-creatures, and thus increases our **patience** in dealing with them. This is particularly true in respect to the household of faith, in which we recognize amongst those whom God has graciously called, some more blemished, perhaps, than ourselves in some particulars—though we may be more imperfect in others. The thought that our heavenly Father has favored and called anyone should make us extremely careful how we would co-operate with the Lord in respect to the call, and be as helpful as possible to all those who are seeking to walk with us in the footsteps of our Lord in the narrow way. We certainly should have special patience, therefore, with the brethren.—Rom. 14:15; 1 Cor. 8:11.

"See that none render evil for evil unto any." This exhortation has a special force when we remember how much evil treatment was heaped upon the followers of our Lord at that time; and that the writer himself, as well as those specially addressed, had suffered much on account of their faithfulness in dispensing the Word of the Lord, the Word of life, the good tidings. The exhortation means that the Lord's followers are not to attempt to retaliate upon their enemies by doing them evil in return, or in any manner to "get even with them." The Lord's exhortation is that we seek to render good in return for the evil we receive, and includes our language as well as our conduct, we are not to give word for word, railing for railing, accusation for accusation, slander for slander any more than blow for blow. It includes also our very thoughts, for we are not even to render anger for anger, malice for malice, envy for envy. Two evils can never make a good—two wrongs will never make a right. Our sympathy for our blinded enemies is to cultivate our patience and forbearance toward them in thought, word and deed.—1 Pet. 2:21-23.

The Lord's people, so far from ever turning aside to render railing for railing or evil for evil, are uniformly to **"pursue that which is good"**—that which is right, that which the Lord approves. This will mean that each member of the Royal Priesthood will pursue righteousness to the extent of his ability—pursue every good and noble sentiment, and seek to live as nearly as possible up to the high standard of righteousness, perfection, exemplified absolutely in our Lord. This pursuit of goodness is to be maintained not only amongst the brethren, where all are professing the same pursuit, but also toward others—in our dealings with the world. . . .

The worldly spirit does not approve this part of the Apostle's counsel, but urges, rather, that we should treat others as they treat us—that we should "give as good as we get,"—meaning that we should give as bad as we get. By way of saying as good a word as they can in their own favor along these lines they sometimes accuse the Lord's followers of cowardice. Courage is one of the noble qualities of humanity, and it is quite a trial to some to be considered timid or lacking in courage; and to such this enjoined restraint of word and act is a particular trial. It is not true, however, that the Lord's counsel tends to effeminacy or lack of courage. This matter is well stated in the language of another, as follows:

"One feature which stands out clear in the society founded by Christ and his apostles is the extraordinary heroism which was shown in the face of death and tortures, not only by men, but by feeble women and tender children. It amazed the heathen magistrates who were striving after **fortitude** by the aid of philosophy. . . . Quiet endurance may be **more heroic** than violent resistance, and the Christian law of bearing personal insults and injuries meekly tends to the development of the highest courage and truest manliness. There is nothing more courageous, more heroic, in all history than living up to this precept."

"Rejoice evermore." The Christian's rejoicing is not hysterical, but founded on established principles, upon promises and comforting assurances of the divine Word which stands firm amid all the storms and trials and shocks of life.

"Pray without ceasing. In everything give thanks." . . .

Having stated succinctly the Church's proper attitude toward the Lord to be one of continued rejoicing, prayer and thanksgiving and acceptance of his divine providences, the Apostle next briefly admonishes them respecting their attitude toward each other in the Church, in their feasting together on the Word of the Lord:—saying,

"Quench not the Spirit.

"Despise not prophesyings.

"Prove all things: hold fast that which is good.

"Abstain from every form of evil."

By following these admonitions, their fellowship in the Lord would be the more profitable—they would, as a congregation of the Lord's followers, be helped onward the more toward the grand standard to which we are called. The spirit of the Lord amongst his people is compared to "a flame of sacred love" for the Lord and all connected with his cause: this flame is enkindled through the divine message in each one individually. . . .

True, the flame of sacred love does not consume and destroy sin, but sympathy with sin; sin is not a part of the new creature, which opposes it and desires to have it consumed,—that the light of righteousness and truth may shine the more brightly. This "flame of sacred love" may, indeed, consume our mortal bodies, as living sacrifices in the service of the truth; but with such a consumption the new mind is fully in accord, and rejoices, realizing that it has in heaven an enduring habitation, and counting it all joy to be reckoned worthy to suffer for the Lord's cause. The more this "flame of sacred love" burns, individually and collectively in the Church, the greater will be the progress in all good things. Hence we are to be specially on guard, that our words and conduct and the general management of the interests of Zion in our midst shall permit this spirit of love to have free course in all our hearts and lives—that it be not quenched either with false doctrines or forms and ceremonies, or too rigid rules or by worldly spirit or by cares of this life or by any other thing, circumstance or condition under our control.—Z. '03:23-25.

Effectual Fervent Prayer

Nehemiah 1:1-11.

Golden Text:—"The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much."—Jas. 5:16.

NEHEMIAH was a young Jew of one of the prominent families of the Babylonian captivity. He occupied a confidential position with Artaxerxes, the Persian king, somewhat similar to the office held by Mordecai under King Xerxes (Ahasuerus), the father of Artaxerxes. His official title, "cupbearer," does not give the proper conception of the dignity of his position. In those days kings needed to be continually guarded against poisons, which could be easily mingled without detection with their liquid refreshments. Consequently the cupbearer was one whose loyalty was esteemed irreproachable, and his duties afforded him privileges and opportunities for intimate intercourse with the king more than others. They became confidants of royalty and court advisers, really occupying the position of Minister of State.

Though possessed of wealth and enjoying the king's favor, and in every way advantaged so far as this world's affairs were concerned, Nehemiah's heart was not surfeited with his earthly blessings and privileges, comforts and advantages. His brother had been amongst those who went up to Jerusalem with Ezra. That expedition had been partially successful and partly a failure. Ezra had heroically drawn the line of demarcation between Jews and others. The walls of the city had been repaired in a fashion, but their enemies had been angered by what they no doubt considered the arrogancy of the Jews in considering themselves separate and distinct from other peoples, refusing to intermarry with them. The sending back to their homes of all foreign wives under Ezra's direction capped the climax of what they considered to be injury done to them. These enemies had spitefully attacked the city, broken its walls and burned its gates, and the people of Jerusalem, comparatively few in number, weary and exhausted, had not the energy to rebuild and repair. Moreover, they feared to do so lest their enemies would deal harshly with them.

It was through his brother, who returned, that Nehemiah gained information respecting the deplorable condition of affairs at Jerusalem. The news made him heartsick, for he not only had the usual patriotism, but, as a Jew and as a believer in the divine threatenings and promises, he had an intensity of love for the land of promise, a burning desire to lend his assistance in every manner for the recovery of the Lord's people and their re-establishment in power as the Lord had promised.

Importunity in Prayer

Our lesson relates chiefly to Nehemiah's prayer to the Lord after he had heard of the conditions in Judea—his prayer for the Lord's blessing and assistance, to the intent that the good promises of the Lord respecting his holy city and land might be fulfilled. Nehemiah does not give us the words of all his prayers, for we learn from other parts of the narrative that he prayed after this manner for four months before he began to have an answer. What we read, therefore, is supposed to be a general outline of the sentiments which he expressed in various forms at different times, praying without ceasing during those four months. Of course during all this time he attended to his duties, but this prayer was always in his heart, the sentiment of his mind, and more or less associated with all his thoughts and plans and arrangements.

So it should be with all of the Lord's people of spiritual Israel. The things which we have only a slight desire for we may mention once or twice at the throne of grace, but those things which lie very close to our hearts become our continual prayer, associating in our minds with all of life's duties and interests, the heart gravitating continually toward the thing we have desired of the Lord, and on suitable opportunities repeating to him the request—making sure that the thing we request is in accord with his promises. This is the kind of praying which the Lord commended saying, "Men ought always to pray and not to faint"—that the Lord's people ought to continue asking for the right things with some degree of persistency, and should not grow weary, hopeless, faithless, faint in their hearts.

Answers Long Delayed

Doubtless there are many reasons why the Lord does not promptly grant such of our requests as are in accordance with his will, in harmony with his Word. We may not know all of these reasons, but some of them are apparent. Undoubtedly one reason for the Lord's delay in answering us often is to test the strength and depths of our desires for the good things that we request of him. For instance, he informs us that he is more willing to give his holy Spirit to us who ask than are earthly parents to give good things to their children: yet the giving of his holy Spirit is a gradual process, and we are enabled to receive it only in proportion as we are emptied of the worldly or selfish spirit. It requires time to thus become emptied of self and prepared for the mind of Christ—in some it requires longer for this than in others, but all need emptying in order to receive the refilling. He that seeketh findeth, but the more he seeketh the more he findeth; to him that knocketh it shall be opened, but his continual knocking and his increasing interest in the knocking means his increasing desire to enter, so that as the door of privilege, of opportunity, swings slowly open before him his courage and strength increase as he seeks to avail himself of the opening, and thus everyway the blessing is greater than if the Lord were to answer the petitions more hastily.

Whenever we think of prayer and answers thereto we should remember our Lord's words, "If ye abide in me and my words abide in you, ye may ask what ye will and it shall be done unto you." (John 15:7.) Ah, there are conditions in this statement. Those who abide in Christ must have gotten into him by faith, repentance and consecration, and to abide in him means that the faith will abide, the repentance for sin and opposition to it will abide, and the consecration to the Lord and his service will abide and be manifest.

The other condition also is a weighty one: "if my Word abide in you." Ah, how evident it is that the Lord meant to associate himself and his Word, the Scriptures, in the minds, in the hearts, in the lives, in the prayers of all who are truly his. We must search the Scriptures to know the will of the Lord, to know what he has promised and what he has not promised, to know what we may ask and what we may not ask for, and ascertaining these, the fully consecrated one will not want to be, to have or to do anything except that which will be pleasing to the Lord in respect to him—"Thy will, not mine be done, O Lord," is his prayer. And when this position has been reached we can readily see that whatever would be asked by one thus well informed respecting the divine promises and fully submissive to the divine will, would be things which God would be well pleased to grant in answer to his requests.

We are to think of our heavenly Father as rich and benevolent, kind and generous, yet wise as well as loving. We are to suppose that he will have pleasure in giving us the desires of our hearts if those desires are in harmony with his plan, which plan he has already framed on such lines as to include our very highest and best interests and the highest and best interests of all his creatures. So, then,

"Faith can firmly trust him,
Come what may."

And his well-informed children can have all the desires of their hearts because their hearts are in full accord with the Lord, and they desire nothing of the Lord except the good things of his purpose and promise. . . .

Effectual, Fervent Prayer

"The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much," says our Golden Text. The prayers of the unrighteous, we understand, will avail nothing; and in this connection we are to remember that "there is none righteous, no, not one," and that all the righteousness which we have or which permits us to present ourselves before the Father, or which guarantees us that we shall be heard of him, is the righteousness of Christ imputed to us—the merit of his sacrifice covers all our blemishes. Let us remember, too, that **it is the fervent prayer that is the effectual one**—the prayer that is earnest, from the heart and not merely from the lips. It is for this reason that self-denial, fasting and praying should be associated in the minds, and in fact we should be so earnest, so fervently desire the things that we request, and be so confident that they are the Lord's will, as guaranteed by the promises of his Word, that we would hold on and wait for the mercies the Lord thus prepares us to receive.

It would be rather unsafe, we think, for any of the "new creation" to make request for temporal blessings. "After all those things do the Gentiles seek." (Matt. 6:32.) They seek those things because they know not of and appreciate not the higher and better, the spiritual things. Spiritual Israelites are exhorted by the Lord to appreciate the spiritual clothing, the spiritual food, the heavenly riches, which moth and rust cannot corrupt, and to seek for these.

The Master tells us what we may freely ask, what we may be assured that the heavenly Father will be very willing to grant to us, though he bear long with us, though he give it gradually to us, and not perhaps as rapidly and as fully as we request it. His words are: "If ye, then, know how to give good gifts [earthly gifts] unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give the holy Spirit to them that ask him." (Luke 11:13.) The holy Spirit is the spirit of love—to God and to man. It cannot be given to us under present conditions except gradually, as the old selfish, wrong spirit is deposed from our hearts. This, therefore, must be continually our prayer to the end of life's journey, that we might be filled with the Spirit of the Lord, and thus praying means that we will be thus laboring day by day, and that the Lord will continually bless us, giving us the fruits of his Spirit in our hearts and in our lives more and more, its joy and peace and blessing.—Z. '05:342-346.

The Transforming Influence of Thought

"As he thinketh in his heart, so is he." (Proverbs 23:7.) "Keep thy heart with all diligence: for out of it are the issues of life."—Proverbs 4:23.

THE HEART is one of the most important organs of our body. If it ceases to work, death is sure to follow. The blood that flows through the heart constitutes the life, the energy of the body. If the blood current is interrupted for a little while, a clot is formed. This is so much of a preparation for death. There must be a continual stream of blood circulating through our bodies to keep life there.

In view of this important function of our natural hearts, the Bible very properly uses the heart, the center of life, as a symbol of the center of our affections, including the will. Our will has to do with everything we do. Whoever of the Lord's people wills to seek more and more to purify himself becomes more and more alive. If we are pure in heart, we resolve to live righteously and soberly in the present life. Whoever appreciates the principle that right is **right**, and wrong is **wrong** will desire to live right—whether Jew or Gentile or the Church of God.

The Church, having accepted God's terms, have made a consecration of their lives to Him. They have engaged to fight a good fight against the world, the flesh and the Devil. They are under special obligations as New Creatures. Their hopes and ambitions are separate from those of the world. They are therefore doubly responsible in respect to their hearts, which represent their inmost sentiments.

According to a man's innermost sentiment, so is he. As a man thinketh in his heart, so is his real character. What is your real will? What are your real sentiments? Not, What **words** do you use? not, What are your **actions?** but, What is the **motive** underlying all these?

The New Creature is to be God-like, spiritual, eventually of the spirit nature in glory—perfect. But before it attains that perfection, the heart of the New Creature is required to prove its loyalty. Some will be overcomers in a higher sense than others, but none will be overcomers except those who are true, loyal, pure. If, therefore, we have made a consecration to God, it should be our endeavor that our hearts, our desires, our motives be perfect. The only proper attitude is to confess our imperfections, if we are wrong. God expects us to be loyal of **heart**. And that loyalty of heart should reach out and control the whole life.

If our thoughts are not according to our ideals, we should endeavor to make them so. We should put away anger, malice, hatred, strife, and all such works of the flesh and the Devil. With some people, in some conditions, these thoughts go very deep. It is not the transitory thoughts of the mind—the passing thoughts—that are meant in our text. Even people of very bad character may at times have deep emotions. The eyes of some persons will be suffused with tears over some trivial matter. This makes them appear to be very tender-hearted, and yet their lives may show that they would as easily be moved to some vicious deed as to sympathy.

We see this fact illustrated in the conduct of mobs. The people who hailed Jesus as King were five days later crying, "Crucify Him!" Those who shortly before had seemed to be so appreciative of Him appeared to lose that appreciation.

Importance of Right Thinking

In reality a man is not always what on the surface he seems to be. His real character is deep down below—the purpose of his life. These are not the mere transitory thoughts, but the deep fissures of thought, if we may so designate those which involve the whole life. The Scriptures bring to our attention the fact that we are to be transformed by the renewing of our minds—by having them made over.—Rom. 12:2.

The Apostle, speaking of some very vicious traits of character, says, "And such were some of you, but ye are washed, but ye are sanctified, but ye are justified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God." (1 Cor. 6:11.) This cleansing, this sanctifying, comes not merely through the reading of the Truth, or the **mental** application of the Truth, but through the **heart**-thinking on the Truth. This heart-thinking, these deep resolutions, are ours as Christians, and are to be guided by certain principles. These have to do with the real man whom God is considering—not the old creature, more or less blemished, according to the degree of depravity. God looks at the New Creature.

These deep heart convictions and purposes constitute a transformation of character. This is the man's **real** condition, and so is **he**. If he have some transitory emotion of anger or of malice, it would not be his **real** thought, his **real** intention. Therefore it would not be **he**, but his old **nature**, temporarily asserting itself. As a New Creature, he is to watch his words, his thoughts, his actions. If a transitory, wrong thought should pass through his mind, it would not be the thought of his heart. And he as a New Creature, should stop it, put it away, so that it may not take root in his heart, and choke out better sentiments.

This right thinking of the heart has very much to do with the whole life. The Apostle says that we are transformed by the renewing of our minds, to know what is the perfect will of God. This is the Christian's standpoint. How glad we are that our Heavenly Father is judging us from this standpoint! How glad we are that He is able to read the heart, that He knows our hearts, that He knows our inmost thoughts!

At one time we might have thought that we were doing God service when we were not. We show our loyalty to God by giving attention to His Word, that we may know what is His will. The more we study God's Word, the more we receive the spirit of the Truth, and the more we appreciate it. And in proportion as we understand God's regulations and desire to be guided by them, our hearts will become purified. Then the more care shall we take of our hands, what they shall do; and of our tongues, what they shall say. Thus we shall keep our hearts—submit our wills to the will of God.

The will is a part of our heart, just as the rudder is a part of the ship. The new will is the rudder to steer us this way or that way. The more we understand the Word of the Lord, the better we understand how to guide our lives. Therefore we are to keep our hearts and purify them by the **knowledge** of God's Truth, the **study** of God's Truth. To do this, the will must ever be on the alert, watching with prayer and thanksgiving. . . .

Our heart is the most wonderful organ of our body. The tongue is the most subtle of all our members. The Lord takes our words as an index of our heart condition. But since we are imperfect, it is not possible for us to be faultless in word and deed. Yet we are diligently and faithfully to seek to attain the perfect mastery of our words. We should be especially on guard in respect to evil speaking. Every tendency toward slander is to be checked. Whoever of us is reviled is not to revile again. These tendencies belong to the old nature.

To be pleasing to the Master, we are to keep our hearts free from every form of evil. If this be done, the heart is rightly instructed of the Lord. Then we will know that we must make good whatever is wrong. We are bound, thoroughly bound, to make it good to the best of our ability. Our heart must keep itself right. . . .

The only persons who are in the right attitude are those who are seeking to have new thoughts, to have thoughts conformed to the Divine arrangement, taking the mind of Christ instead of their own imaginations and judgment, and thus growing up into Him in all things. This is our happy position. —Z. '13:163-165.

"Judge Nothing Before the Time"

"Therefore, judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts: and then shall every man have praise of God."—1 Cor. 4:5.

"JUDGE nothing before the time." How could we have judged before this time as to whose hearts were loyal and true? But now, in this day of the Lord's presence, when the magnet of divine truth makes manifest those who have and those who have not an affinity for it—those who refuse to recognize the voice of the "Good Shepherd" and will not follow his leading, and who flee not from the voice of strangers, but hearken to and follow them—it becomes our duty, as well as our privilege, to judge who is on the Lord's side and who is against him: for, says the Master, "He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad."—Matt. 12:30.

"Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come:" but then let your spiritual senses be exercised in observing and marking the heretofore hidden things which the truth, in its effects, is bringing to light. See how it is bringing to light the hitherto covered deformities of the various creeds. Where is the intelligent Calvinist today who would not like to bury his creed sea deep, and forever hush this wrangle that has been exposing its deformity for a few years past? And where is the intelligent Armenian that is not trembling lest his turn may come next? Everything is being dragged to the light, whether men are willing or not; for every hidden thing must be revealed. And not only the hidden things of creeds and systems of error and iniquity, but also the hidden things of individual character; "for there is nothing covered that shall not be revealed, neither hid that shall not be known. Therefore, whatsoever ye have spoken in darkness shall be heard in the light; and that which ye have spoken in the ear in closets shall be proclaimed upon the housetops." (Luke 12:2, 3.) Ah! it is the day of reckoning with the Church, and "the Lord hath a controversy with his people." And this controversy, this reckoning, is not merely with the Church-nominal in its great sectarian branches; but in a special sense it is with those who have escaped from the bondage of error and sectarianism, and who, because faithful to their consciences and the truths brought to their attention, have been served by the Master with present truth as "meat in due season" (Luke 12:37), and who have been permitted to enter into some of the "deep things" of God's plan.

The world has not yet (1892) come into this judgment: its reckoning is yet future; but ours is now upon us. We, to whom the testimony of divine truth has been borne, before whose mental vision the whole plan of God with all its specifications has been spread out and carefully explained, now stand on trial, yea, under the final tests of that trial which is either to prove or disprove our worthiness to enter into the promised reward of the faithful. Many, as predicted (Psa. 91:7), are proving unworthy, and some still stand. And among those whom we fellowship and bid God-speed as faithful brethren in Christ, it is our duty to judge as to whether they are still faithful when the magnet of truth makes their judgment so manifest in this day of the Lord; for it is written (2 John 10, 11) "If there come any unto you and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into your house, neither bid him God-speed; for he that biddeth him God-speed is partaker of his evil deeds." **Here is a responsibility with reference to our endorsement of another which we cannot ignore and still be faithful**; and except we judge of one's course by his fidelity or infidelity to the truth, we shall be endorsing error quite as often as truth. It is our privilege to know the truth and to hold it firmly and to be faithful to it to the end: and if we so abide and walk in the light we will quickly know when one has turned away from the light into darkness, and will be able to render wholesome counsel and warning to such, and to help those who still retain enough of the spirit of meekness to accept the proffered assistance. But, if such a one still pursue the path of darkness and call it light, thus deceiving himself and others, we cannot further endorse him and be guiltless. To do so is to add our influence in some measure, at least, to the error and in opposition to the truth, and thus to become partaker of his evil deeds.

The necessity for this careful discrimination and jealous guarding of the truth in these last days is very manifest, both from the warnings of the Scriptures and from observation of their fulfilment. "In the last days," says the Apostle, "perilous times shall come." (2 Tim. 3:1.) Why? Because the prince of darkness will make every possible effort to retain his power and dominion; and ignorance, error and superstition are his strongholds. He first used all his power to keep men in ignorance and to foster superstition. But now God's due time has come for knowledge to be increased (Dan. 12:4), and the Millennial dawn is breaking; and not only the Church but the world is now waking up and beginning to think. So the policy of Satan now is to devise plausible counterfeits of the truth whereby to entrap and mislead those who have been making progress in the knowledge of the divine plan. As. in the beginning of our Lord's ministry at his first advent. Satan's efforts were concentrated upon the one object of causing him to stumble, thereby to nip the divine plan in the bud. and during the Gospel age the consecrated members of the body of Christ have been specially opposed and beset by him. so now his efforts are concentrated specially upon the last members of that body. "the feet of him." It is for this cause that so many new and plausible forms of error have been brought forward. Satan is using every effort to thwart God's plan and to stumble the feet. And God even more than permits this: he encourages it by **sending** these strong delusions of Satan among his professed followers—at the same time assuring all who at heart are faithful to his Word and to their covenant of self-sacrifice that they need fear no evil. for he will be with them and uphold them though a thousand fall at their side.

Ever since the plan of God has been made manifest to the saints. the delusions of error have been rapidly multiplying. This was foretold by the Apostle who. referring to our Lord's second coming. said. "And then shall that wicked [the Man of Sin] be revealed. whom the Lord shall consume with the spirit of his mouth. and destroy with the bright-shining of his presence.* whose **parousia** [Christ's presence] is with** [or accompanied by] the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders. and with all deceivableness of unrighteousness in them that perish, because they received not the love of the truth. that they might be saved. And for this cause God shall send them strong delusion. that they should believe a lie. that they might all be condemned who believed not the truth, but had pleasure in unrighteousness."*** (2 Thes. 2; 8-12.) One after another the deluded ones who have fallen into the various snares set for their feet have become active advocates of the several causes they have espoused since they departed from the truth. and are advanced by the adversary as teachers. angels or messengers of new light. They never seem to realize that they have gone into darkness. but imagine they have made great strides of progress in the light. This is because they have been overcome by the strong delusions of this evil day. They verily mistake the darkness for the light. the error for the truth. . . .

However. none are ever permitted to be thus overcome who have not in some way been unfaithful to the truth and hence unworthy of it. Upon all such God has said he would send the strong delusion. so that they shall believe a lie. The truth being designed for those only who are worthy of it—the elect—all others are bound to lose it. But it is impossible to deceive the "very elect." God will keep them by his mighty power because of their faithfulness and loyalty to him. . . .

How great is the responsibility of our present position before God. the great Judge of all hearts. He has shown us special favor in revealing to us the wonders of his plan and in setting before us the grand prize of our high calling. Thus far we were counted worthy of those favors and eligible to the prize of joint-heirship with Christ. How worthy have we proved ourselves since receiving this knowledge? Have we received it with meekness and humility and with a gratitude which manifested itself in active service of the truth—in defending it and standing by it nobly in the midst of all the reproaches hurled against it? Have we refused to compromise the truth to any extent to avoid its otherwise inevitable reproach?

If we are not thus jealous for the truth we are not worthy of it. and some of the deceptions of this "evil day" will surely number us among its victims; for it is in this time of the Lord's presence that Satan is to work so mightily. with great power to deceive and with signs of success and with lying wonders of error. His various schemes will have great success. in comparison with which the success of the truth will seem small; for with these. as with Gideon's band. it will be a time of sifting. and "who shall be able to stand?" But let those who stand girt about with divine truth fear nothing: the Lord is permitting these delusions that they may serve his own wise and benevolent purposes in the separating of the worthy from the unworthy, and for the manifestation of those who are at heart loyal to him.—Z. '92: 36-38.

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* The words, "Even him." here supplied by the translators, and not in the original text. as indicated by the black type. tend to obscure the sense of this passage.

** The Greek word "**kata.**" rendered "after" in the common version. should here be rendered "with." as the same word is rendered in Mark 1:27; 1 Cor. 2:1; Eph. 6:6.

*** Greek **adikia** should here be rendered **untruth** or **error** because contrasted with **truth.**

Quietly Minding One's Own Business

"But we beseech you. brethren . . . . that ye study to be quiet. and to do your own business."—1 Thess. 4:10. 11.

THERE IS A quietness that appertains to sloth and indolence; but this evidently is not what the Apostle means in our text; for elsewhere he urges us to be "**not** slothful in business." (Rom. 12:11.) There is another quietness that appertains to **peace**—a **composure** which is the opposite of **nervousness, giddiness and childishness.** This condition we believe to be that which the Apostle has in mind. The Lord's people are to study to have a mind that is well balanced. This composure is not natural to the majority of people and is. therefore. something to be studied and attained. We are in the school of Christ to learn such lessons.

This desirable quietness represents the graces of the Holy Spirit—meekness. gentleness. patience and brotherly kindness. While we are to be "fervent in spirit. serving the Lord" (Rom. 12:11), we are also to be obedient to the instructions of the Holy Spirit.

in meekness, quietness and love. We are to endeavor to take a proper estimate of the affairs of life, and not to allow trivial things to excite us. This course, if faithfully pursued, tends to produce a quietness of spirit.

To mind one's own business is a very important lesson to learn. Surely every Christian has observed that much of the trouble in the world results from interference one with another. In every difficulty, one or both of the persons involved failed to mind **his own** business. Some people are always seeking to find fault with others, and seem to think they are commissioned to correct the whole world. We find no authority given in the Bible for such a course.

A busybody is a person who meddles with the affairs of others with which he properly has nothing whatever to do. Sometimes he fancies that it is his duty to advise, criticise, investigate, chide and reprove others. The Golden Rule will prove a great help in deciding what is one's duty in any case. This commandment of the Lord prohibits everything akin to busybodying. Each member of the New Creation should educate his conscience to discriminate between **brotherly-love** and **busybodying,** and should learn to apply the rules of justice and love to every act, word and thought, so far as in him lies.

Where a matter is one in which we are **personally** concerned, however, we shall not be meddling with other people's affairs, but minding our own business, when we give it proper attention. There are times, places and circumstances which the Bible points out as proper for correction, reproof, etc. A parent may correct a child; a teacher, a pupil. It is not meddling for a parent to have knowledge and direction of all that is going on in the house, nor for the teacher to be in touch with the affairs of the school. The personal rights of the members of a family or of a school should never be lost sight of, however. A householder and those who are serving a house come under the same rule as do parent and child, teacher and pupil.

One of the greatest lessons of life is to learn that one who spends considerable time in correcting others, even though it be properly done and well, is prone to forget **himself.** One's first duty is to **bring himself** into harmony with the Divine arrangement and to **keep himself** there.

Busybodying an Evidence of Unbelief

To keep ourselves in the Love of God, we should cultivate the fruits and the graces of the Holy Spirit. There are not a few who can discourse learnedly on those qualities, but who seem not to be able properly to apply their knowledge to the affairs of every-day life. They seem to be unable to realize where meekness, gentleness and love should be shown in their own experiences. There are some things which we can teach others better by example than by precept. If we show in the little things of life that we are governed by the principles of justice and love, and if when under trial we exhibit meekness, gentleness and other fruits of the Spirit, our influence for good will be greatly increased.

Observation in life leads one to believe that fully one-half of the world are meddle-some busybodies, and that many of their trials result from this weakness. It would appear that in nearly every family there is some one, perhaps a husband, perhaps a wife, perhaps a child, who takes advantage of the kindness and generosity of the others and rules the house. Usually in such cases there is much injustice done. Those who take this position often attempt to justify their course by saying, "If I did not take the reins in hand, things would not run properly." Such do not perceive that they are busybodies.

This course of conduct demonstrates a lack of faith in God. We should do our duty and leave the rest to the Lord. There are people who in the future will find that they have lost much because they have not been subject to the Divine arrangements. Any one of the Lord's people who thus practises injustice is not making progress as a New Creature. Whether it be the husband, the wife or the child who rides rough shod over the rights of others, this course is contrary to the Divine Law and the spirit of Love. Some day these will realize that they made a grave mistake.—Col. 3:18-21.

The head of a house and of a family has a responsibility which he should recognize and which it is his duty to exercise. But he should do so with loving interest, looking out for the welfare and the preference of those whom he directs. The responsibility of a husband in his home, therefore, means the obligation which the Divine Law has laid upon him and which often requires the sacrifice of his own time and preferences in the interest of his family. It is his duty to discharge this responsibility.—Eph. 5:25-33; 6:4.

The Scriptures also describe the proper place for the mother in the family. This position is a noble one. But every woman who usurps the place of the head of the household is surely doing injury to herself and the best interests of her family, even though she may seem for a time to prosper in her wrong course.—1 Pet. 3:1-6.

There are many who are impatient and unkind in their dealings with the members of their own family, but who to outsiders seem to be models of deportment. It is hard to see how they justify their course, especially when we recall that they have a particular responsibility toward their family for mental, as well as physical sustenance. It behooves each one who would have the approval of God to study his conduct, not only toward the world and the brethren, but also toward the members of his own family, that he may be sure that he is minding his own business in every sense of the word.—Z. '13:26, 27.

When the conditions are fully ripe for the great Revolution a most trivial circumstance may serve as a match to set on fire the present social structure throughout the whole world; just, for instance, as in the case of the French Revolution, the first overt act, it is said, was the beating on a tin pan by a woman whose children were hungry. Soon an army of mothers was marching to the royal palace to ask for bread. Being refused, they were joined by the men, and soon the wrath of the nation was kindled and the flames of revolution swept the whole land. —D. 535.

Interesting Question

"He Went to His Own Place"

Question.—I notice an article in **The Watch Tower** which says that Judas died the Second Death. Can a man die the Second Death until he has passed from death unto life, until he has been spirit-begotten, until he has once been in Christ Jesus and free from condemnation?

Answer.—Judas and all the other Apostles occupied a peculiar place or position, different from other Jews of their time, because they were in contact with our Lord Jesus, the Great Light. They saw that Light, and were responsible in proportion as they saw it. For any of them to sin as Judas did against that Light, would be a very reprehensible thing. True, Judas had not been begotten again of the Holy Spirit; for spirit-begetting was not possible until Pentecost. But this does not prove that he could not die the Second Death. On the contrary, we know that during the Millennial Age there will be some who will not receive the begetting of the Holy Spirit, but who will die the Second Death—the death that will be destruction. Their responsibility will lie in the fact that they will be brought to a knowledge of the Truth, with the opportunities which it will give them of coming into full harmony with the Lord. If they respond to those opportunities, they may attain everlasting life; if they do not respond, they will die the Second Death.

Such an opportunity was given to Judas. For a long time he responded favorably; but afterwards he rejected the blessings that were his portion, and ignominiously proved himself a traitor to the One who was his Benefactor. Jesus was to be the Judge in the matter; and we have His words, calling Judas the "son of perdition." (John 17:12.) He said that it would have been better for that man if he had never been born. (Matthew 26:24.) This would not be true if Judas were to have an opportunity during the Millennial Age. The Scriptures say that he went to his own place. (Acts 1:25.) His own place was not Heaven; for it was not open to anybody yet; his own place was not Restitution; for that has not yet come. His own place was the only place then open—the Second Death.

Present Standing of the Church

The Ransom-price, the Ransom-sacrifice of Jesus, has not yet even been **paid** over, or applied, for the whole world of mankind. If it were, the whole world, redeemed by that payment, would be in His hands. The world has not yet been in our Lord's hands. The time, however, we believe is near when through the strength of that Sacrifice, He will ask the Father, and the Father will give Him "the heathen for an inheritance, and the uttermost parts of the earth for His possession." (Psalm 2:8.) That will be the time when He shall have paid over the Ransom-price. He **laid down** the Ransom-price when He died, but did not **apply** it. The world is still under condemnation. Only the Church has escaped that condemnation thus far.

The Church escapes from that condition of condemnation by the **imputation** of the benefits of that Ransom which is not yet **paid over**. If the Church could have the merit of Christ imputed to her down through the Gospel Age since Pentecost, the same merit, we believe, could be imputed before Pentecost; for our Lord had made the consecration of Himself, and, so far as the type goes, He had already slain the bullock. That is, the consecration of our Lord at Jordan represented the killing of the bullock in the Atonement Day type; it was the giving up of His earthly life. This was done when He was thirty years of age, before He had called these disciples. It was then that the Father recognized and accepted His Sacrifice; for He gave our Lord the begetting of the Holy Spirit. If that Sacrifice had not been accepted then the Father would not have begotten Him of the Spirit.

The Apostles' Standing During Our Lord's Ministry

The Holy Spirit was given as an evidence that what Jesus had given to the Father was accepted. What He did at Calvary was merely the finishing of that work which He began at Jordan. Our Lord treats the matter from this standpoint, and in discoursing with His disciples tells them that they might pray to God as their Father. No Jew had ever done this before. The Jews thought that Jesus' claim to be the Son of God was blasphemy, and took up stones to stone Him because of this. (John 10:31-33.) Whoever said, "Our Father," was making himself to be a son of God. No Jew, so far as we have any record throughout the Scriptures, ever made use of such expressions; they were a House of Servants.

Then again, Jesus addressed His followers, His disciples, as though they had been accepted of the Father. He was the Father's Agent, and He received them in harmony with the Father's arrangement. He declared that "No man cometh unto Me except the Father draw him"; and, "No man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand." He made these statements before they had received the Holy Spirit at Pentecost. This was treating them as though they had the full initiation into the Divine Family. Our Lord declared that "he that believeth in Me hath everlasting life." (John 6:47.) All these disciples had believed on the Son. As long as they would hold Him in the Scriptural manner—hold to Him by faith, according to the terms of this Gospel Age, faith and consecration—they might count that they had the life promised to His faithful followers. If any would abandon Him, as Judas **did**, of course he would pass back again from the **imputed** life to the death condition.

Rejection of Knowledge a Serious Matter

Judas was a New Creature in the reckoned, or imputed, sense of the word in which all the disciples were said to have passed from death unto life. It was to the new life that they had passed, not to Restitution life; for the Lord said to these same disciples that they who had followed Him would sit upon twelve thrones (Matthew 19:28), thereby implying that they had passed to that life which would be the condition of the enthroned. Speaking of them, then, from the standpoint of the New Creation, this was possible because in our Lord's contract unto death, which He entered into by baptism, He really gave up all of His earthly rights. It was possible in the tentative form, the Father purposing that not many days after Jesus' ascension they would be endued with power from on High. —Luke 24:49.

Hebrews 6:4-8 does indeed refer to the Church, but it does not enumerate the only conditions on which any will die the Second Death. All of the Church are liable to this condemnation. If they would sin wilfully, if they would fall away so as to deny the very Foundation of God's favor—the Ransom-sacrifice of Jesus—they would die the Second Death. This Scripture does not say that there are no other conditions on which the Second Death will be inflicted. We see that the Second Death will be inflicted on some in the Millennial Age.—Z. '15:141, 142.

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The Lord himself will see to it that every member of his Body who is deeply earnest and anxious on the subject will have the proper witness of the Spirit, the proper testimony to his heart of his continued acceptance and faithfulness.—Z. '08:142.

◆

If anyone tells us something derogatory to the character of another we should reject it and decline to hear unless proved by Scriptural methods. And no time should be wasted on the matter, believing nothing derogatory until it is forced upon us. The Lord's people should not receive what they may hear without proper examination.—Z. '11:28.

Who is on the Lord's side? All told, they will only be a "little flock." Like Gideon's band, the company now gathered by the proclamation of the harvest-message of truth must be tested and sifted until only the loyal, faithful, true hearted, brave and valiant soldiers of the cross remain; and to these, though their numbers be small, will the laurels of victory belong when truth and righteousness finally prevail. Let no man boast of numbers now when the highest interests of the elect of God are all bound up with the faithful few, to whom it will be the Father's good pleasure to give the Kingdom.—Z. '91:118.

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STANDFAST BIBLE STUDENTS' GENERAL CONVENTION

DECEMBER 2nd, 3rd and 4th, 1921

Woog's Hall, Seattle, Wash. (Market St. and Seventeenth Ave.)
(Friday Evening Only) At Ballard Hall (Market St. and Twenty-Second Ave.)

CHAIRMAN - - - Bro. G. Zinck
SECRETARY - - - Bro. A. Hogen

FRIDAY, December 2nd—

PRAISE

"Praise ye the Lord. Praise God in his sanctuary: Praise him in the firmament of his power. Praise him for his mighty acts; Praise him according to his excellent greatness. Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord. Praise ye the Lord."—Psa. 150:1, 2 and 6.

10:00 A.M.—Address of Welcome....................................Bro. Roy Pattison
Response ....Bro. G. Sellars
10:30 A.M.—Bethel Service.
10:45 to 12 noon—Resume of Eastern Tour..........................Bro. G. Zinck

2:00 P.M.—Praise and Testimony.
3:00 P.M.—Intermission.
3:30 to 5 P.M.—Old Corn Gem Study (No. 70:3)..............Bro. J. Moore

7:30 P.M.—Praise Service.
7:45 P.M.—Tabernacle Study..Bro. C. E. Heard

SATURDAY, December 3rd—

PATIENCE

"Wait on the Lord: Be of good courage and he shall strengthen thine heart; Wait, I say, on the Lord."—Psa. 27:14.

10:00 A.M.—Bethel Service.
10:15 to 12 noon—Three 35-minute Sermonettes ....
....................Bros. R. Pattison, Al. Osborn and G. Sellars

2:00 P.M.—Praise and Testimony.
3:00 P.M.—Intermission.
3:30 to 5 P.M.—Old Corn Gem Study (No. 70:5)..........Bro. Hy. Brown

7:30 P.M.—Praise Service.
7:45 P.M.—Temple Study (The Four Quarter Marks).......................
....Bro. I. C. Edwards

SUNDAY, December 4th—

PRAYER

"The Lord is nigh unto all them that call upon him, to all that call upon him in truth. He will fulfil the desire of them that fear him: He also will hear their cry and will save them."—Psa. 145:18, 19.

10:00 A.M.—Bethel Service.
10:15 to 12 noon—Three 35-minute Sermonettes ....
.............................Bros. J. Bartlett, G. Vance and G. Zinck

2:00 P.M.—Praise and Testimony.
3:00 P.M.—Intermission.
3:30 to 5 P.M.—Old Corn Gem Study (No. 70:7)......Bro. Hy. Maxwell

7:00 P.M.—Praise and Testimony.
7:45 P.M.—Discourse ....Bro. C. E. Heard

LOVE FEAST

Old Corn Gems

NUMBER SEVENTY-ONE

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The Carol of the "Bride"

Cant. 4:12-16.

The North Wind blows cold o'er my Garden today—
Its fierce blasts rush mad on their pitiless path:
The trees bend and sway in their giant grasp,
And cower and shrink from their furious wrath.

They plant their roots deep, and still deeper: their arms
Take on sinews of strength as they writhe in the blast.
O bitter North Wind, thy fury is vain!
For strength born of need brings the victory at last!

* * *

Today o'er my Garden the South Wind plays,
And gently it kisses the blossoms fair:
Their soft petals tremble in glad response,
And their perfume flows out on the quivering air.

The soft breeze caresses each glistening leaf,
It whispers a message to each blushing rose;
And sweet, timid violets look up at its touch—
The touch that only the South Wind knows.

It sings to the trees a low, murm'ring refrain,
And steals thro' the branches with tremulous sigh;
They clap their soft hands as they dance in their glee,
For old Winter has fled and the Summer is nigh.

* * *

O South Wind, O North Wind, ye both brought rich gifts!
My fair flowers are sheltered, my trees great and strong!
And sweeter my blossoms, and richer my fruits;
To North Wind and South Wind I carol my song!

My Beloved has come to His Garden—and lo,
Sweet spices and perfumes and blossoms most fair,
And ripe, golden fruitage I lay at His feet!
What joy could be greater! What priv'lege so rare!—Z. '15:373.

Why Should I Fear

"Whene'er the storms come down on thee,
And days of peace all seem to flee:
This thought thy peace again shall bring,
Why should I fear?—the Lord is King.

"E'en when the tempest rages high,
And darkest clouds are drawing nigh,
With hands of faith to this, O! cling—
Why should I fear?—the Lord is King.

"Amid the stormy waves of life,
Above the tumult and the strife,
The chimes of hope still sweetly ring—
Be not afraid—the Lord is King.

"Thy ship is toss'd by wind and wave,
But there is one whose power can save;
Across the sea he hastes to bring
Both rest and peace—the Lord is King.

"Yes, Jesus walks upon the sea,
And in the storm he comes to thee;
Then trust in him, rejoice and sing;
He calms the waves—the Lord is King.

"He stretches out his hand to thee,
And from thy fears he sets thee free;
Beneath the shadow of his wing
He keeps thee safe—the Lord is King."
—Z. '11:94.

ANNOUNCEMENT

A local Convention will be held in Victoria, B.C., Saturday, Sunday and Monday, December 31st, 1921, and January 1st and 2nd, 1922. All Standfast Bible Students will be welcome. Meals will be provided and reception committee will meet all boats and trains. The Convention starts at 3:45 p.m. on the Saturday. For further information apply to Bro. J. H. Bartlett, 2526 Government Street, Victoria, B.C.

The very fact of coming to a positive decision is a great blessing, and a great help in the formation of character. Every time we come to a decision, on any question, it strengthens mind and character and makes us that much more ready for another test—along some other line, perhaps. One decision for the right prepares the way for others in the same direction, just as hesitancy, indecision upon one point prepares us for hesitancy upon all points, and more or less stops our Christian progress and character-building.—Z. '02:42.

◇

It is in vain that we say we love the Lord if we do not seek to do those things pleasing in his sight. He is not seeking those who merely give outward allegiance, but those who at heart love him and his righteous arrangements.—Z. '02: 271.

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OLD CORN GEMS

NUMBER SEVENTY-ONE

"And they did eat of the OLD CORN of the land on the morrow after the Passover . . . and the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the OLD CORN of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year." Joshua 5:11-12.

A SAFE RULE

"WHERE A BROTHER GIVES AN INTERPRETATION OF A SCRIPTURE WHICH DIFFERS FROM THAT GIVEN BY BROTHER RUSSELL, AND BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION SEEMS REASONABLE AND IN HARMONY WITH THE PLAN OF GOD, THEN WE BELIEVE IT A SAFE RULE TO FOLLOW BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION, FOR THE REASON THAT HE IS THE SERVANT OF THE CHURCH, SO CONSTITUTED BY THE LORD FOR THE LAODICEAN PERIOD; AND THEREFORE WE SHOULD EXPECT THE LORD TO TEACH US THROUGH HIM. WHERE THERE ARISES A DOUBT IN THE MIND AS TO WHICH INTERPRETATION IS CORRECT, THEN IT IS ALWAYS SAFER TO RESOLVE THAT DOUBT IN FAVOR OF BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION. WE BELIEVE SUCH TO BE IN HARMONY WITH THE LORD'S WILL." Z. '18:51.

Hope An Outgrowth of Confidence

"Cast not away, therefore, your confidence, which hath great recompense of reward: for ye have need of patience, that after ye have done the will of God ye might receive the things promised."—Hebrews 10: 35, 36.

CONFIDENCE is another word for trust. The Apostle's thought, then, is, Cast not away your faith, cast not away your trust, which hath great recompense. It seems strange to us, sometimes, that God should purpose to reward **faith** rather than **works**. Surely almost anybody else would have made a Plan which would have said, I will reward you according to what you can accomplish. But God has declared that He will reward us according to our faith, our confidence, our honesty, our sincerity. Under the present conditions God can do nothing with a dishonest man. During the Millennial Age this class will receive the necessary stripes—just exactly what they need—to bring them rightly into accord with righteousness. But for the time being, God is making an appeal only to the honest-hearted. . . .

God is not dealing with the world yet, but is dealing with the few. There was a time when He dealt with typical Israel alone. Then, beginning with our Lord Jesus, who kept the Law which the Israelites could not keep, and who obtained the blessing accruing from the Law Covenant—from that time God's Plan has been, we see, to gather out of all nations and out of all parts of the earth a people for His name, to bear the name of Jesus, to be the Bride, the Lamb's Wife.

As a woman is joined to a husband and bears his name, so this company is called out from the world to bear the name of Christ. The word Christ signifies, as we know, The Anointed of God, and includes Jesus, the Head of The Christ, and all the members of the Church which is His Body. God purposed the selection of the Church, and He purposed that it should not be accomplished by force, by compulsion. If any have thought that God has been dealing with the world, they have been mistaken. We are told in the Bible that God has been **drawing** a class, **calling** a people, a very different thought. Our Lord Jesus is the great Shepherd of the sheep. The sheep hear His voice and follow Him. It is a wonderful privilege to become a member of the Body of Christ. . . .

An Honest Heart—A Willing Mind

We remember that the Apostle declares that the Gentiles rejoiced that they had been accounted worthy to hear. (Acts 13:48.) Do we realize what an honor it is that God has asked us to hear His Message? It is a great honor, to our understanding. The one thing that is the basis of God's favor is **sincerity**. There are people who are born dishonest, born insincere. The Message was never designed of God for a dishonest mind. There is something about the dishonest, insincere, self-sufficient, that would surely lead them to take a wrong course. . . .

"Cast not away, therefore, your confidence," said the Apostle. He had been telling these Christian Hebrews that they had a good degree of confidence. They had accomplished a good work. They had endured hardness in various ways, partly while they themselves were made a gazing-stock, and partly while they were the companions of those who were so used. The Apostle went on to say that God was not unjust to forget their labor of love.

A Potent Test of Loyalty

But, dear brethren, it is not enough to make a good consecration; it is not enough that for a time we fight a good fight. No, indeed! God is not accepting to the Kingdom those who once were faithful. He desires to have those who were once faithful, who were afterwards faithful, who are **always** faithful! He desires to have in the Kingdom class those whom He can trust implicitly, those to whom He can safely give the glory, honor and immortality that He has promised to the faithful. And before they receive this high reward and exaltation, they must be thoroughly tested and proven. We see the reasonableness of this arrangement in every particular. If "He has called us to the obtaining of the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ," He expects us to be found worthy of that honor—not that we could **do** anything to make ourselves worthy of so great exaltation, not that we could merit it in ourselves, but He expects us to be true overcomers, and to develop the character necessary for so high a position of responsibility and glory.

Have you given God the glory in all the affairs of your life, in whatever measure of success you have attained in His service? or have you often taken the glory to yourself? This is a good question for each one of the Lord's children to ask himself. We know that we have deserved no glory whatever in connection with what we possess or what we have accomplished. If any have attempted to take glory to themselves, they have taken the glory from the Lord. . . .

We as the Lord's people look up and see our great Creator's wonders in the heavens, and we say, How great is our God! Then as we look at ourselves and find how wonderfully we are made by our Creator, so that by thinking, by the power of the mind, we can move the different parts of the body—the hands, the feet, the eyes—oh, we say, this is the most wonderful machine in all the world! And so we are led to exclaim, Surely this great God, our God, our Father, is willing to tell us, His people, who love Him and desire to know His will, what His will is! He must have a good Plan; for He is wise, He is loving, he is just.

Confidence Proportionate to Knowledge

And so we have found our old Bible, which perhaps was long covered with dust, and we have studied about God's Justice, Wisdom, Love and Power. And we have learned to have confidence in that dear old Book; for its Message is so consistent, so reasonable, so loving. The Bible explains how sickness, sorrow and pain came to be in the world. It informs us that all these came as the result of sin, and that from the very beginning God foreknew the fall, and purposed the restitution of mankind from sin and death. The Bible points out that the blessing to all men would come when Messiah would come. Thus we have confidence in the Word of the Lord and in the great Plan presented in that Word. And we have confidence that God has invited us to be joint-heirs with Christ in His Kingdom. . . .

Ah, yes! Others lay down their lives for earthly kings, and **we** have a King of kings and Lord of lords, and if we could not lay down our lives in loyalty to Him, what would we think of ourselves! We have a good God, **worthy** of all confidence, and we trust Him. In proportion as we have knowledge of God, of the Bible, in proportion as we have grown in grace by seeking to walk in the narrow way, in that same proportion our confidence is growing stronger and stronger.

Confidence Indicative of Heart Condition

The only question remaining is, Will we be found faithful? The Scriptures declare that He is faithful who has promised, and that He will do exceeding abundantly more than we could ask or think. He has determined that all who will receive the great blessing will be those who will demonstrate their loyalty to the fullest degree. Hence the Apostle urges, "Cast not away your confidence, which hath **great recompense of reward.**"

God will one day reward our confidence. Why is it that the Lord will especially reward our confidence? The reason is this: Our confidence in God represents our heart condition, and it will go down like a barometer in falling weather if we lose our faith. Our hearts cannot be wholly stayed on God, except as we are strong in faith. The only instances in which Satan will be permitted to take away the confidence of God's people will be in the cases of some who have not been living up to their light. The Lord will permit such to go gradually into darkness.

So we are to keep firm hold of our confidence; for this assures us that God is our Father. We all know something of the wireless telegraphy which is now being used in a marvelous manner on the sea and on the land. And this is only a feeble illustration of the wireless communication that maintains between the true Christian and the Heavenly Lord. In every circumstance this confidence, leaning on the Lord, will look to Him. There will be the wireless communication between Father and child.

When the Lord's people find themselves in difficulty, they should reason like this: What is the Lord's will? What does His providence indicate? He has said that **all things** shall work together for good to me because I love Him; therefore, having confidence in God, I am sure that all things shall indeed work out for my good. I have faith in His Wisdom and His Power and His Love. He could have protected me from this difficulty had He seen best. So the fact of its reaching me proves that He saw fit to permit it for a wise reason. He has promised that He will not suffer me to be tempted, tried, beyond what I am able to bear. As He is faithful, He will never fail to keep that good promise. So then, I will "not cast away my confidence, which hath great recompense of reward."

Confidence in God To Be Tested

If God would reward according to **works,** some of His children would get very little. The very ablest of God's people cannot do very much. We spend one-third of our time in sleep; we need perhaps eight hours more for preparing our food, etc., and we have a thousand and one things to do in the remaining eight hours. How little time we have, after all, even if we have cut off many things that once took more or less of our time! The most intelligent people have very little time to spare.

Do your very best, and try to note how little you will be able to accomplish by the close of the day. Think of those five minutes, that half hour, etc., and count up and see how much you render to the Lord your God daily. We fear that each of us would be ashamed to see how little time the sum total would make. And if the reward depended on our works, it would surely be a very small reward. God knows also that some have more time at their disposal and some less, and that some have more talents and some less.

Some are able to give ten times as much as others. How much would you like to do for the Lord? How much do you **strive** to do for the Lord? It will be in proportion as you have confidence in Him. As you come to have more trust in the promises, you will try harder and harder to live up to all the terms and conditions of discipleship. If you have but little confidence in the Lord, you will be like the man who was told that if he would go to a certain place he would find a fortune, and who replied, It is absurd to consider anything of the kind! If some one should say, Behind a curtain in a certain corner there is hidden a bag of gold, and any one who will go there for it may have it, it would be safe to say that not two persons out of a hundred would go to look for it.

God is testing your faith, your confidence, and our own. And, oh, that is worth so much more than all the wealth of the world! We have been invited to try for the great Prize. We said, Yes, Lord! Yes, Lord! Then He said, Will you be faithful under the conditions which I impose? I am watching to see how faithful you are every hour, every minute. I will protect you from the pitfalls in the way, as you strive to show forth My praises; I will uphold you in every trial. My dear children, I want to give to you a great blessing. You have all entered on a common basis. You would be very unequal in the race if I should take you according to your natural qualifications. I will judge according to your heart and how you do in little things. He that is faithful in the little things, in that which is least, will be faithful in that which is greatest. I will **reckon** the matter thus. That is a fair proposition, and exactly what the Lord says. God purposes to reward greatly all faithfulness.

The Nature of the Present Test

But there is another phase of the confidence. Bible students all over the world have been expecting certain things to occur; and we have been hoping that the Lord's time is near for the setting up of the Kingdom, the time for the fulfilment of the prayer, "Thy Kingdom come." We have been hoping for this; but if it should not come as soon as expected, **we will still hold fast our confidence.**

There are not many people in the world who are hoping to die soon; and it is only **our confidence** that makes **us** have this hope. If we did not have a strong confidence in the outcome, then we would not have the desire to pass beyond the veil. We are speaking of our confidence to those whose eyes of understanding have been enlightened to see the lengths, the breadths, the heights and the depths of the love of our God, and to know something about the times and seasons of our Father's Plan.

The Apostle tells us, "Ye, brethren, are not in darkness, that that Day should overtake **you** as a thief. **Ye** are all children of the light, children of the Day; we are not of the night, nor of darkness." (1 Thess. 5:4, 5.) God has promised that He will give His true children the light at the time appointed, and that they shall have the joy of understanding His Plan at the appropriate season.

"What more can He say
Than to us He hath said!"

The Editor (Brother Russell) has been rejoicing in these blessed experiences. Even if the time of our change should not come within ten years, what more should we ask? Are we not a blessed, happy people? Is not our God faithful? If any one knows anything better, let him take it. If any of you ever find anything better, we hope you will tell us. We know of nothing better nor half as good as what we have found in the Word of God. As the hymn expresses it:

"It satisfies my longings
As nothing else can do."

Personally, we can say, If God has some further experiences for us, we are glad that He has; if we need further polishing, we hope He will give it to us. If it takes a year to get the polishing necessary, we desire to have this time allotted. Or if He desires to have us do some work in the polishing of others, and if we should not get into the Kingdom ourself, we would be glad to have His will done.

We have sometimes asked, How many brethren would be willing to take a thousand dollars for what they know of the Truth? Not a hand was seen! Who would take ten thousand dollars? None! Who would take a million dollars? Who will take the **whole world** in exchange for what he knows about the Divine character and the Divine Plan? Nobody! Then we said, You are not a badly discontented crowd, dear friends. If you feel so rich that you would take nothing in exchange for your knowledge of God, then you feel just as rich as we do. . . .

No tongue or pen can tell the peace, the joy and the blessing which a clear knowledge of the true God has brought into our heart and life. The Story of God's Wisdom, Justice, Power and Love fully satisfies the cravings of both our head and our heart. **We are seeking no further.** There is nothing more to be desired than to get this wonderful Story more clearly before our mind, and to appreciate more and more the Divine character as illustrated by the great Divine Plan of the Ages, which our Heavenly Father is gradually outworking for the blessing, first of the Church, and afterwards of all the families of the earth.—Z. '14: 375-378.

◆

Each one of the Lord's footstep followers should daily, yea, hourly, keep watch over his thoughts and words and deeds and the **underlying motives connected therewith.** This the Apostle terms judging ourselves. He assures us that those who so scrutinize, criticize, themselves should seek to bring the very thoughts of their minds into captivity to the will of God in Christ. These are the very ones who will not need to pass through the trying experiences which will come upon others more careless—less zealous to know and to do the will of the Father. —Z. '09: 359.

The "Mark" of Character

What Is This Great "Mark" of Character Set Before Us by Our God?

WE ANSWER, it is stated under various names: as for instance, our Lord Jesus mentioned it when he said, "Be ye perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect." (Matt. 5:48.) The same mark is mentioned by the Apostle when he says that God predestinated that all who will be of the elect must be "conformed to the image of his Son." (Rom. 8:29.) These two statements differ in form, but are the same in substance. The same mark is mentioned again by the Apostle when he says, "The righteousness of the Law is fulfilled in us who walk not after the flesh but after the spirit." And again he tells us that "Love is the fulfilling of the Law." (Rom. 8:4; 13:10.) Here, then, we have an aggregated definition of what constitutes the "mark" of Christian character, in the elect: it is godlikeness, Christ-likeness, Love. The requirement, therefore, would seem to be that the Lord's people, holy and elect, must attain to the same character or disposition of love that God possesses and that was manifested also by our Lord Jesus.

But some one will say, How can we, "who by nature are children of wrath, even as others," ever hope to attain to so high a standard or mark of character as this, that we should love as God loves, as Christ loves? We answer, that we need never hope to attain to this high standard as respects the flesh, for so long as we are in these mortal bodies, and obliged to use their brains, we will necessarily be more or less opposed by the selfishness which through the fall has come to have such complete possession of our race through the mental, moral and physical derangements incidental to six thousand years of depravity.

The attainment of this mark of perfect love is to be an attainment of the heart, of the will—the new will, "begotten, not of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God," through the holy spirit. Nor do we find, nor should we expect that the new mind would come up to this standard at the beginning of our Christian experience. The new mind, although inspired of God through the exceeding great and precious promises of his Word, is nevertheless our own will, and more or less circumscribed by its channel and instrument, the human brain. Hence the Apostle informs us that the new mind must constantly fight a battle against the flesh, and that its victory means the death of the flesh—that it cannot be actually perfect until the "change" shall come, by which this newly begotten will shall receive its spiritual body in the first resurrection. But since the receiving of a spiritual body in the first resurrection will be the receiving of the prize, we see that the race toward the mark and the attainment of that mark must be made by the new mind while it is still in this mortal body or "earthen vessel."—2 Cor. 5:2-4. . . .

That we may clearly comprehend this subject, let us notice how small were the beginnings of this grace of love in our hearts; and let us hope that many, as they trace the matter here, and compare it with their own experiences, will be able to find large developments in their own characters—that they have passed one after another of the quarter-mile marks in the way, and that they have reached "the mark of the prize."

(1) The beginning of our experience as Christians the Apostle expresses, saying, it was not that we first loved God, but that "he first loved us"—that attracted us to him. (1 John 4:19.) A sense of justice told us that since God had so loved us as to redeem us at so great a cost, and to provide for us so great salvation, it would be as little as we could do—it would be **our duty** to love and serve him in return. This beginning of love we will designate as **duty-love.** It lacked in many respects qualities which now permeate our love for God, which is of a higher, a more advanced character, because we have grown in grace, and in knowledge, and in love. The Apostle seems to speak again of this same duty-love, when he says, "The love of Christ **constraineth** us [draws out our love in return]; for we thus judge that if one died for all, then were all dead [under divine sentence, the curse]; and that we who live [who have been justified to life through faith in Jesus' redemption] **should** henceforth live not unto ourselves but unto him who died for us." (2 Cor. 5:14, 15.) Here again it is the "**should**"-love or duty-love,—the first, the crudest, the simplest development of our love toward God, our starting-point in the race toward perfect love.

(2) After we had exercised the duty-love and sought to obey God, not only in the avoidance of sin, but also in sacrificing our earthly interests and rights for his sake and the truth's sake, in obedience to his will—in obedience to duty-love—we began to find in our hearts an appreciation of the **principles** of righteousness; we began to love righteousness—justice, mercy, love: not at first with a fervency of love, but rather with respect for the glorious qualities of the divine character, plan and law. This was our first quarter-mile mark, so to speak—love of principles of righteousness.

(3) The more we learned to love these elements of divine character, the principles of righteousness which find their perfect representation in the divine being, and through which the divine being is revealed to the eyes of our understanding—in that proportion the true love to God (based upon principles rather than upon duty), comes into our hearts. So to speak, here in the race-course we had gained the second quarter-mile mark—love of God's character; even though we had not yet discerned the length and breadth and heights and depths of that character, we had begun to love the Lord in the true way—from appreciation not only of what he had done for us, but also and specially for what he is;—from appreciation of his character.

(4) Love of God from this latter standpoint as the representative of every grace and every virtue, as the representative of righteousness, and the opponent of every injustice and inequity, led us to

seek and to follow out these principles amongst our fellow-men, as well as in our own characters. As we began to love truth, purity, nobility of character, wherever it could be found, we found some of it in a mottled and streaked condition even in the world of mankind: we found that the original law of God, written in the heart of father Adam, although largely erased and obliterated from the hearts and consciences of his children, is not wholly gone:—that to some extent, especially under the influence of Christianity in the past eighteen centuries, some features of this perfect law may be dimly discerned amongst men.

But our scrutiny, backed by our increasing love of these principles of righteousness, found nothing satisfactory amongst natural men — nor even amongst those professing godliness—professing to be followers in the footsteps of Jesus. We found these all, like ourselves, far short of perfection, far short of the glory of God. But as the true love, of right principles, burned in our hearts more and more fervently, we learned to **sympathize** with the entire "groaning creation," and to "**love** the brethren;" for in the latter we perceived a class inspired by the same spirit by which we ourselves had been begotten of God, the spirit of the truth; we saw some of them struggling as we had struggled, with appreciation only of the duty-love; we saw others who had gained a higher conception than this, who had learned to appreciate the principles of righteousness and to love them, and to hate iniquity, and further, to love the God who is the embodiment of these. And the realization that these "brethren," like ourselves, were gradually approximating the divine standard—"pressing toward the mark"—filled us with interest in them and in their battle against sin and its weaknesses, and against the Adversary and his beguilements. We became more and more interested in their welfare and overcoming in proportion as we were striving and making progress in the same "narrow way." This love of the brethren we did not have at the beginning; it marks a distinct progress in our race toward the "mark;" we might term it the third quarter-mile mark. But although a grand attainment was achieved when this love of the brethren reached the point of willingness to "lay down our lives for the brethren" (1 John 3:16), yet it was not the **full** attainment of the "mark" for which we are running.

(5) The "mark of the prize" is a still higher attainment in love;—the one which we understand the Scriptures to point out as the very highest attainment is that of **loving our enemies**—not merely tolerating them, abstaining from injuring them, etc., while thinking evil of them; but far beyond this, it signifies the full purging out of all anger, malice, hatred, envy, strife, not only from our actions but also from our words, and even from our thoughts, our sentiments. It means such a **complete triumph of love in our hearts** as not only loves God supremely and delights to sacrifice in his service from love of the principles represented in his character, and love for the brethren, which makes us careful of their feelings and interests, and ready to lay down our lives on their behalf, to deliver them from evil, or to avoid putting a stumbling block in their way, but it means additionally that the love of God has been so thoroughly shed abroad in our hearts that we can love and do love every intelligent creature, and delight to do good unto all men, and to serve all men as we have opportunity, especially the household of faith.—Gal. 6:10.

This does not mean that the love which we have for the world must be of the same kind that we have for the Lord, who is the personification of righteousness, and for the "brethren," who are striving to have Love, the righteousness of the Law, fulfilled in them through Christ. It means rather a sympathetic love: a benevolence such as God himself exercised toward the whole world of mankind. It does not mean that we are to love the world in the sense condemned by the Apostle when he said, "Love not the world, neither the things of the world." (1 John 2:15.) It does mean the attainment of the condition indicated in the expression, "God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever should believe on him might not perish, but have everlasting life." (John 3:16.) It is a love for the world, which will not only be glad to see them lifted up out of degradation and sin to holiness and purity and righteousness, but which will be glad to co-operate to these ends as opportunities may offer—not, however, anticipating God's love and the development of his plan of the ages; but co-working with God in that great plan which he has promised shall eventually bring, during the Millennial age, blessing to every creature through the elect class now running in this race for attainment of the "mark," to win the great prize of joint-heirship with his Son. This perfect love, which, including the other developments, extends even to enemies and those who injure us and speak evil of us falsely for Christ's and righteousness' sake, is the fourth mark in the race —"the mark for the prize."

While it is well for us to notice these various steps in the progress of our race toward the "mark," we are to remember that the illustration does not fit perfectly, but that rather while there is this order of progression it is less distinctly marked in our experiences, in which duty-love but gradually leads into the higher forms, remaining, but subordinately, to the end. It is a part of the blessed arrangement of God that those who are running in this race are not reckoned with according to the flesh, but as "new creatures," according to the spirit, the mind, the will, the intention. We may never hope to attain to this grand "mark" of perfect Love in our flesh, so that every act and every word would give full proof of the real spirit of love which fills our hearts. Some may have greater weaknesses and defects in the flesh than others, and hence may be less able than others to uniformly and thoroughly show the real sentiments of their hearts. But God looketh at the heart; it is the heart that he sees running in this race; it is the heart which is to attain to this "mark" set before us in the Gospel—this mark of perfect love, which includes even our enemies. "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God."

If now we see clearly that perfect love is "the **mark** of the prize," we see something to strive for in our daily lives; a condition which we can by God's grace attain, and which must be obtained if we would be counted worthy a place in the Kingdom. The Lord is not selecting the members of the Bride of Christ by an arbitrary election; neither is he selecting them on the lines of a mere sentimentality; he is selecting them on the lines of character, heart-development; and those who attain this likeness to his Son, this "mark" of the prize, this standard of what is pleasing and acceptable to the Father—these, and these alone, may have confident hope of joint-heirship with our Lord. . . .

If we have attained to the fourth mark, of perfect love, which includes even enemies, we have indeed cause for great rejoicing. The prize is ours, if we but remain faithful. But, as the Apostle says, "Having done all, **stand**"—with all the armor on: stand in various testings which will then, as much as ever along the race-course, be brought to bear against us to divert us away from the mark, before the great Inspector and giver of rewards shall say, "Well done, good and faithful servant: enter thou into the joys of thy Lord."—Eph. 6:13-17.

It is indispensable to those who have reached the mark of perfect love that they shall keep actively engaged in the service of the Lord, laying down their lives for the brethren; because he who loveth not his brother, whom he hath seen, what assurance hath he that he really loves God, whom he hath not seen? (1 John 4:20.) Such must stand, not only as representatives of God and of the principles of righteousness, but as representatives of those strong in the Lord and in the power of his might, and in the faith of his Word,—ready and willing and efficient in the encouragement of other runners in the race-course.—Z. '01: 8-10.

Temptations Peculiar to the New Creation

"We have not an High Priest who cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities, but was tempted in all points like as we are, yet without sin. Let us, therefore, come boldly unto the Throne of Grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need."—Hebrews 4:15, 16.

The Character of the Master's Temptations

THE MASTER probably had presented to His mind the suggestion: Now take an easier way. This way that **seems** to be indicated is the crudest possible one. Go to God and tell Him that it does not seem right to you, who have been loyal through all these ages, that you should be subjected to such treatment: that this seems a very strange way to treat a faithful Son: that there can be no good reason for it, and nothing can be gained by it. Ask God if He cannot make some change. Ask Him if He is not overdoing the matter.

And so we, His followers, may sometimes have similar suggestions. But a murmuring, rebellious spirit would prove that we are not in the right attitude of heart: it would prove that we had either never really submitted our will to the Lord or else had withdrawn it, and that we lacked confidence in Him. Any such temptations must be promptly resisted by the child of God.

When St. Peter sought to defend our dear Master from the soldiers and officers who came to arrest Him, though knowing what the end would be, Jesus said: "The cup which My Father hath poured for Me, shall I not drink it?" He did not think for one moment of yielding to any temptation to use His superior power to prevent His enemies from taking Him. He showed them that He possessed such power: for they all went backward, and fell to the ground. Thus He made it manifest that had He chosen to exercise His supernatural power He was infinitely stronger than they, and submitted not because He **must**, but because He was in reality voluntarily submitting Himself to death. This was a demonstration of His previous declaration: "No man **taketh My life** from Me, but I **lay it down** of Myself." (John 10:17, 18.) He steadfastly refused to yield to any appeals from His flesh to escape or to lessen His sufferings. "He was tempted in all points like as we are, **yet without sin.**"

We might weaken sometimes; we might come short—and we **do** come short. We cannot fully live up to the glorious standard. **Christ** was without sin. **We** have sin abounding in our flesh, and we have weaknesses which He did not have. But if we are to **follow in His steps,** we are to **overcome,** and to prove overcomers **to the end.** We are not to say to ourselves: I cannot live as Jesus lived, even if I try ever so hard; what is the use of setting up so perfect a standard? But there **is** use in it; and we should earnestly strive to come as near as possible to that standard. By keeping this glorious Pattern ever before us, we shall be able to come much nearer perfection than if our standard was lower. We must have no less than this perfect standard as our aim.

If Jesus had sinned and had come short in any way, it would have meant failure complete. He would never have had a resurrection. This was typified in the Jewish high priest when he passed under the veil with the blood. The high priest who had not followed every instruction of the Law in the offering of his sacrifices would have died under the veil. This was what Jesus feared in Gethsemane, when "He offered up strong crying and tears unto Him who was able to save Him out of [Greek **ek**] death"—not to save Him from **dying,** but to save Him **out of death by resurrection.** And the record is that He was heard and was strengthened, comforted. (Luke 22:39-45; Hebrews 5:7.) As soon as He had the Father's assurance that He had not violated any conditions, and that He would not go into eternal death, He was content to suffer any other experience that might come to Him.

Our Sympathetic High Priest

From the fact that our High Priest was tempted and suffered, we may know that He is not one who is cold and indifferent. On the contrary, He is One who is full of sympathy, who has had the largest kind of experience. (Hebrews 2:18; 5:8.) If then, we have temptations, what must we do? We are to come to our great High Priest: and as we come to the Throne of Heavenly Grace, we may come with boldness (or, more properly translated, with courage, not doubting), knowing that the One who meets us there is fully able to sympathize with our every sorrow and need, and with our every temptation.

If we have not sinned wilfully, if our sins have been those of imperfection of the flesh through besetment, so that at the time we were not able to overcome and to control the flesh properly, we may come with courage, knowing that the Lord understands all about the weaknesses of our fallen human nature—He remembers that we are but dust. (Psalm 103:13, 14.) St. Paul says we cannot properly judge even ourselves as respects our own weaknesses. He says (1 Corinthians 4:3, 4), "With me it is a very small thing that I should be judged of you or of man's judgment: yea, I judge not mine own self: . . . but He that judgeth me is the Lord." He knows how to make all due allowance. Then let us not hesitate to come to Him in prayer, pleading His promises. Let us seek for the mercy of the Lord, knowing that we shall receive it, when we are truly striving to be faithful to Him.

Our Father knows all about these experiences we are having, and He made the provision for our covering. He provided succor from our difficulties, that we might come in as members of the Body of Christ, even though imperfect. He knows that we cannot fully control our imperfect bodies. But as we become stronger, we should be better able to control the mortal body. The new will should subjugate the old mind, and have better success in conquering the flesh. We must scrutinize ourselves and our progress; we should not be satisfied nor feel that we are proving overcomers, unless we can from time to time see growth in ourselves in Christlikeness and in ability to subdue the old nature with its impulses and tendencies.

No other arrangement would have been so good for us as the one the Lord has chosen. We have our weaknesses and imperfections charged up to us; but God has provided a way by which we can have them all forgiven, if they are unavoidable or if there has been no wilfulness connected with them. Any measure of wilfulness in a child of God requires expiation by stripes. If we judge—closely inspect or scrutinize—ourselves, our thoughts, words and actions, we shall require less judging and disciplining by the Lord to correct our faults. If we realize that we have been remiss in any way in keeping our vows, if we think that we have been lax in some particular at any time, it is helpful to impose some penalty upon ourselves that we shall feel. We should go to the Lord in earnest prayer, asking forgiveness, and promising Him by His grace to strive to be more watchful in the future. We should daily scrutinize ourselves along this line, and never lightly pass over any failure.

How precious and comforting the realization that our merciful High Priest is touched with the feeling of our infirmities! We should never, however, relax our vigilance because of this knowledge, or take any advantage of His mercy. But we rejoice that we have a Mercy Seat to which we can go as soon as we are conscious of our inability to be all that we would, and rejoice to know that we shall not be turned away.—Z. '14: 358-360.

"A Thorn in the Flesh"

> "And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure. For this thing I besought the Lord thrice, that it might depart from me. And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me. Therefore I take pleasure in infirmities, in reproaches, in necessities, in persecutions, in distresses for Christ's sake: for when I am weak, then am I strong."—2 Cor. 12:7-10.

THIS was the language of an overcoming saint, meekly bowing to the Divine will. Noble and loyal and true and strong in character as the Apostle Paul was, he yet realized that he was a member of the fallen race, and, in common with all humanity, subject to frailties. God had called him to a most important and glorious work—that of bearing the Gospel to the Gentiles; and, for the benefit of the whole Church, to him were granted special and wonderful revelations, even above all the other honored and beloved Apostles.

He was caught away in mental vision to the third heaven—the New Dispensation, the Millennial reign of Christ—and shown things (doubtless the Plan and purpose of God, as now made manifest to us, largely through his writings, in the light of this harvest period, but) not lawful to be uttered then, because not then due to the Church. (2 Cor. 12:4.) Upon him devolved the care of all the Churches of the Gentiles, and great were the responsibilities of his office. Though the position was a most laborious and trying one, requiring great fortitude, zeal, energy and self-denial to fill it, it was also one of great honor.

"The Messenger of Satan to Buffet"

And Paul appreciated the honor of such intimate fellowship of service with the Lord, and manifested his appreciation by untiring zeal and enthusiasm. But even in this the Lord recognized a personal danger to his beloved and faithful Apostle—a danger of pride and self-exaltation, which, if it should develop, would soon unfit him for further service and rob him of his future reward. So the thorn in the flesh was permitted to come. It came, not from the hand of the Lord, though by his permission; but, as the Apostle affirms, it was "the messenger of Satan to buffet" him.

A thorn in the flesh is always a painful thing;

and whatever this may have been, it was something severely trying to Paul. At first he thought only of the pain and annoyance it caused him, and of its hindrance to him in the Lord's work; it was a messenger of Satan that he was anxious to get rid of. Three times he besought the Lord for its removal. But no, it had come to stay, and the Lord mercifully made him to realize that though it was very undesirable to the flesh, it was, nevertheless, profitable to him spiritually; for otherwise he might become too much exalted.

My Grace Is Sufficient for Thee—My Strength Is Made Perfect in Weakness

This implication of weakness the Apostle humbly accepted. He did not resent it and begin to boast of his strength and to reproach the Lord for not exerting his power for its removal; but, on the contrary, with grace and gladness he accepted the Lord's judgment of his heart, and his estimate of his strength, and appreciated the love that thus cared **for him personally,** while through him he was ministering to the whole Church.

Yes, praise the Lord! he chooses his own instruments, and whets and grinds and polishes them for the more effectual service, and wields them with force and power in the service of his people; but in all the painful and laborious service he has special care, also, for the willing and faithful instrument. He will not suffer it to be tried beyond that which it is able to endure; nor will he suffer it to be exalted without some counterbalancing thorn in the flesh to preserve its equilibrium.

The answer to the Apostle's prayer, although not in accordance with his request, was a blessed consolation—"My grace [my favor] is sufficient for thee; for my strength is made perfect [made manifest] in [your] weakness."

"Most Gladly Will I Glory in My Infirmities"

This is also the blessed consolation of every truly submissive heart. How many of the Lord's people are tempest-tossed and sorely tried in these days; and, doubtless, many of them have earnestly besought the Lord to remove this or that trial or affliction; but the piercing thorn still remains for their discipline and perfecting! Let all such, like Paul, give ear to the Master's voice—"My favor is sufficient for thee." What if other friends forsake thee, and hosts of foes seek to overwhelm thee, if thou hast my favor, my love, is not that sufficient? And what though the flesh be weak and the heart sometimes faint, my strength shall supply your lack; and while you walk in the way of my appointment your weakness shall only the more manifest the power of God working in and through you.

What sincere child of God has not realized in times of greatest need and weakness, the power of God on his behalf supplementing his weakness with strength from above? And when the task was accomplished to which the Lord had called him and for which he felt so incompetent of himself, has he not realized in the outcome the wonder-working power of God?

In view of such a gracious provision to supplement his weakness with Divine strength, the faithful Apostle meekly responded, "Most gladly, therefore, will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me." Having put forth all his own energies and faithfully used his own ability to its fullest extent as a wise steward, it was his joy to recognize the hand of the Lord working with him—by miracles and signs and with demonstrations of the spirit and of power. (Heb. 2:4; Acts 19:11; 1 Cor. 2:4.) These demonstrations of Divine power, supplementing Paul's faithful use of his natural abilities, were the Lord's endorsement of all he did—the manifestations of Divine approval, both to himself and to others, and, consequently, cause for great rejoicing.

To Rejoice in Tribulation Not Possible Except One Is in Fullest Accord With God

With the Apostle it is also the privilege of all God's children to have their weaknesses supplemented by Divine grace, while they meekly and faithfully use their talents in the Lord's service. And so all the faithful may rejoice in tribulations and infirmities, while God overrules the former, and supplements the latter to his praise.

But to rejoice in tribulations, to endure meekly and patiently a sore thorn in the flesh, and even to glory in such personal infirmities as make the power of Christ the more manifest, is not possible except to those whose hearts are in fullest accord with the loving purposes of God. If the heart be influenced by pride or ambition or love of fame or wealth or any worldly craving, joy in tribulation is impossible. But if the old ambitions and desires of the flesh are kept under, and faith, love, hope and zeal are all alive and active, we shall have the consciousness of the Divine favor, and then we can rejoice in every experience.—Z. '11:104, 105.

Venial and Mortal Sins

ANY violation of divine law is sin; whether committed willingly or unwillingly.—1 John 3:4; James 2:10.

The terms "venial" and "mortal" as relating to sins are seldom used outside of the Church of Rome, the great counterfeit of the true Church; yet by the use of these terms two classes of sins are distinguished, properly and Scripturally, although in a way which the Church of Rome fails to recognize.

A "venial sin" is one which may be forgiven or pardoned—a pardonable sin.

A "mortal sin" is one which is not forgiveable. It is a deadly sin: one incurring the penalty of death—everlasting death.

The apostle John (1 John 5:16, 17) refers to both of these sins, saying,—

"There is a sin unto death [a mortal sin]: I do not say that he shall pray for it [to ask or expect its forgiveness]. . . . And there is a sin, not unto death [a venial sin]."

There is but one penalty expressed against sin by the Creator and Lawgiver. "The wages of sin is death." "The soul that sinneth, it shall die." (Rom. 6:23; Ezek. 18:4.) But the great and just Judge never sits in judgment upon a case in which the one on trial has not a full and fair opportunity to know and do his duty. Thus it was in Adam's trial: he was created a perfect man in his Creator's image and placed amid a favorable environment where obedience was both possible and reasonable; and he was fully advised that the penalty of transgression would be death. (Gen. 2:17.) . . .

All true Christians will of course seek to avoid every form of sin, and in all things will seek to do that which is pleasing to the Lord. But all, soon or later, find that they have the treasure of the new nature, the new will, in an earthen vessel (2 Cor. 4:7); and that the imperfections of the earthen vessel (our human bodies) more or less mar all our efforts to please and serve God. Consequently, even the most devout find that they need to go repeatedly to the throne of divine **grace,** that they "may obtain mercy [forgiveness], and find grace to help in time of need." (Heb. 4:16.) And knowing that there are some sins that are not forgiveable, it becomes important to all the saints to know just what is the difference; not that we may continue in (venial) sins that grace may abound (Rom. 6:1, 2); for so to do would be to sin wilfully, which would change the sin from venial to mortal; but that we may be the more upon our guard against all sins; and that, on the other hand, those who have tender consciences may not unjustly accuse themselves of the sin unto death and become hopeless.

Because we are imperfect in our judgments by reason of the fall, we all need divine instruction and "the spirit of a sound mind." Otherwise some would err in one direction and others in the opposite. For instance, some are of a humble, self-accusing mind, constantly disposed to judge themselves too harshly, and to forget that God "knoweth our frame, he remembereth that we are dust;" and that, had it been possible for us to have commended ourselves to God by our works and words and thoughts, judged by his standard or law, then there would have been no redemption necessary, no sprinkling of our hearts with the precious blood, no imputing of the justification or righteousness of Christ, through faith. Of this class, usually, are those who are oppressed with a fear that they have committed mortal sin, while those who seem to commit the sin unto death are generally quite self-satisfied and have no suspicion of the penalty upon them. This latter class, like the Pharisees of old, have so much self-esteem and self-satisfied assurance that they often estimate their errors, weaknesses and imperfections as graces. . . .

The sins and blasphemies which may be forgiven are such as are committed in **ignorance.** The sins which cannot be pardoned are the **wilful sins.** Our race, because of the fall, is greatly under the dominion of weakness, ignorance, blindness, etc., **inherited** from Adam and augmented by all of our progenitors. And our Lord Jesus, having paid the penalty of Adam's transgression, can justly remit and forgive for his people all responsibility for such defects as they do not endorse but are striving against.

The sins and blasphemies which cannot be forgiven are such as were not covered by the **ransom.** While God's grace of forgiveness in Christ is for **"many offences"** (Rom. 5:16), it is because those many offences are directly or indirectly the result of the first offence—Adam's disobedience—which was fully offset by the obedience and sacrifice of Christ on behalf of Adam and all his race. Hence, all those who come to a clear comprehension of right and wrong, righteousness and sin, and who then deliberately choose the sin, the wrong, not because of inherited weaknesses, physical, mental and moral, but of **preference for unrighteousness,**—such cannot claim that their fault was of ignorance, nor of heredity; and hence it would be a fresh and wilful sin like the first; and is not covered by the ransom which redeemed from the first transgression. It is therefore a fresh sin unto **death** (a mortal sin), for which Christ did not die; and "Christ dieth no more." Only one redemption is provided. Such a sinner must die for his own sin; his life is forever forfeited; he can do nothing to recover it; and it is not God's will that Christ or any other creature should redeem such again, seeing they chose sin, after they clearly comprehended its character and knew that they had been redeemed from its power. You need not pray for such, says the Apostle John. We must pray in harmony with the divine plan and arrangement if we would have our prayers answered.

Thus we have before our minds, in a general way, the fact that the only **mortal** sins are those committed against considerable knowledge, and of evil intention, wilfully. It is not, we think, unreasonable to suppose that, in comparison with the whole world of mankind, these intelligent, wilful sinners are now comparatively few; just as the saints are a "little flock;" and in part for the same reason,—because, as it requires the light of the knowledge of God to permit us to choose the right and accept Christ and be justified by faith, and to be sanctified through the truth, so it requires light to reject Christ and his righteousness and to choose wilful sin, unrighteousness. However, the fact that comparatively few during the Gospel age have had light and opportunity sufficient to permit them to be of the "little flock," the "few chosen" to be the kings and priests in the Millennial Kingdom, and the fact that few for the same reason could commit full mortal sin, does not prove that only a few will ever commit mortal sin. When, during the Millennium, the conditions are favorable for all for the attainment of Everlasting Life, the same favorable conditions will make it possible for all to commit mortal sin, whose penalty is the Second Death. We have no assurance that the "sheep" will outnumber the "goats." (And although in Europe and America the flocks of literal sheep do outnumber the goats, yet in the land of Palestine, where our Lord spoke the parable, their numbers even at this day are about equal.) . . .

Mixed Sins—Partly Wilful

If it were merely a question of wilful or not wilful sins, it would be comparatively easy to decide respecting our own shortcomings and those of others; but it is a more difficult question. The

Christian may be considered in some respects a dual being: he not only has his natural body, depraved by inherited sins and weaknesses, and his natural mind also depraved, and in sympathy with the weaknesses of the flesh, but he has also his renewed mind or will, which desires to serve the law of God. These two minds or wills are contrary: they cannot be harmonized; and the man who endeavors to recognize both, and to make the two joint-rulers of his mortal body, is the "double-minded man," "unstable in all his ways," described by the Apostle James (1:8). The "lukewarm," neither cold nor hot, neither for sin nor against sin, are failures in every sense of the word. (Rev. 3:16.) God wants positive characters, and others will not be approved or accepted.

In every case, then, the new mind must be in control, and the depraved, fleshly mind must be subjected to it for destruction. But here comes the difficulty. The natural mind ("heart") is deceitful above all things, and desperate as well as wicked (Jer. 17:9), and the various members of our bodies in their depravity sympathize with the natural mind and favor it; so that when the new mind battles with the old mind and pursues it to destroy it, the latter feigns to be dead, and hides quietly for a time, only to come forth more craftily later.

So then, with the Apostle, we can realize that even when the new mind is enthroned as the ruler of these mortal bodies, the old mind, favorable to sin, although dethroned and reckoned dead, is not actually dead, and will not be as long as our mortal bodies are defective—**i.e.,** until death. Hence we must daily mortify [deaden] the will and deeds of the flesh. But sometimes the deadened will of the depraved flesh (selfish, or impure, or in any event despicable to the new will, "the mind of Christ"), encouraged and helped by the influence of the "spirit of the world" or by the devil (perhaps as a messenger of light to deceive), rises up to ensnare and destroy the new will and its new hopes and aspirations. In such cases how many have suffered at least partial and temporary defeat, until they have remembered to call for reinforcements of strength from Him who has promised to never leave nor forsake us, and to give grace and strength for every time of need. Then we realized that greater is he that is on our part, than all them that be against us,—within and without.—Rom. 8:23, 31.

And when such a battle is ended, and the new will sits down to reckon the damage inflicted by the raid of the old will, there must be some self-crimination—"Oh! why was I not more watchful? I knew from experience that I was quite vulnerable at the point from which the attack came. Nor did I repel the attack with proper diligence. I almost fear that I was willing to have the attack, and that I encouraged the enemy, Sin; and if so, was it not disloyalty to the Lord? And was it not also a wilful sin, since the new will did not repel it with sufficient energy?"

Was this a venial or a mortal sin?

Such a case as we have described would not be a mortal sin. This is shown by the fact that the new will eventually holds the field of battle, and that so far from having pleasure in the wreck of good resolutions and hopes and prayers, etc., etc., it feels chagrin, shame and contrition for failure to have done all that could have been done to oppose the depraved will. On the contrary, those who have sinned wilfully and with full intent, and whose sin is mortal, do not feel penitent: but afterward approve their sin, and boast of it, generally **as greater light** and liberty. (See Heb. 6:4-6; 10:26-31.) In the latter text (verse 27), the "fearful looking for of judgment" does not refer to the wilful sinner, who is bold, defiant and self-satisfied, but to the people of God, who realize the fearfulness of the position of those who "count the blood of the Covenant a common thing," despising God's favor therein extended, and preferring to stand in the filthy rags of their own unrighteousness.

But such a sin as we have described would not be **wholly** a venial sin if the will **consented** to it in any degree;—if only to the extent of not resisting it. If there was anything that could have been done and was thought of to resist it, but was not done, preferring to taste again "the pleasures of sin" only for a brief season, it would seem to contain a measure of wilful sin. Such is a mixed sin. Chiefly it originates with the weakness of the flesh and inherited weakness, aggravated by outside temptations, all of which are elements of venial sin, forgiveable upon repentance, confession and restitution to the extent of ability, through the merit of the sin-offering presented by our great High Priest. "If any man [in Christ] sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous;" "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." (1 John 2:1; 1:9.) But to the extent that the will consented to sin, even for a moment, it was **unforgiveable**; and for that measure of responsibility we must expect to suffer "stripes;" **i.e.,** chastisements. This is dangerous, too, for every such raid by the old nature encourages and strengthens it for fresh attacks, and weakens and discourages the new nature, and tends to grieve the holy spirit whereby we are sealed; and, if encouraged, the new will would soon expire, the old will obtain complete mastery, and soon we would be walking after the flesh and not after the spirit; and "the end of those things is death"—the Second Death. It is evident, therefore, that the tendency of mixed sin is toward mortal sin.

Whenever we find that we have been overcome of evil, we should "judge ourselves:" we should scrutinize our own course, and not only feel contrite toward God, and resolved to be more vigilant and more faithful in the future, but we should right the wrong to the extent of our ability, and humble ourselves before the Lord. The Apostle says, "If we would judge [reprove, correct] ourselves, we should not be judged [reproved, corrected, by the Lord]; but when we are judged, we are chastened of the Lord [punished with "stripes"], that we should not be condemned with the world."—1 Cor. 11:31, 32; 1 Tim. 5:24.

The Sin Against the Holy Spirit

A brief definition of sin or blasphemy against the Holy Spirit would be,—Any transgression, or words of evil disdain, against the light of truth, the spirit of truth, when clearly discerned. Such a sin contains at least a measure of wilfulness, and that measure cannot be forgiven. It must be expiated. If there were no extenuating circumstances, of weakness, blindness, temptation, etc., its expiation would cost the life of the transgressor, and constitute his share in the Second Death. But if, as generally now, there be extenuating circumstances, the transgressor, by availing himself of the terms of the Covenant, may have **forgiveness to the extent of the ignorance** or other extenuation, and may expiate the wilful elements of the transgression by suffering "stripes,"—chastisements. These chastisements may consist in the natural consequences of a wrong course, or in special retribution or discipline by means of adversity, sickness, etc.

Sometimes the light may be very clear, and the wilful wrong-doing very pronounced, as in the case of the Pharisees who heard the Lord's teaching and saw him cast out a devil, and said, He casteth out devils by the power of Beelzebub, the prince of devils. They were at least partly blinded by Satan and ignorance (Matt. 15:14; Acts 3:17); hence had they rejected Jesus and denied that he was the Messiah promised by the Lord through the prophets, had they called him a fraud and a hypocrite, all this might have been attributable to their blindness, and might have been forgiveable as venial sin, under the gracious terms of the Covenant. But when they blasphemed the holy power, the holy spirit of God, operating through Jesus, to good works and never to evil works, they were overstepping their ignorance, and stating wickedly, **wilfully,** what they could not have believed. To that extent, therefore, they were guilty of more than venial sin. Because of this wilfulness their blasphemy became a sin which could never be forgiven, "neither in this world [age], neither in the world [age] to come." No provision has been made (nor ever will be made, as we understand the divine plan), for forgiving any wilful sin, except Adam's first transgression. **All other wilful sins must be punished.**

But as the blasphemy of the Pharisees was more than a venial sin, so it was less than a mortal sin, because they did not sin against a clear understanding: they were "blind leaders of the blind," as our Lord testified (Matt. 15:14); and they did considerable in ignorance, as Peter testified. (Acts 3:17.) This unpardonable sin of the Pharisees, therefore, was one of the "mixed sins" which must needs receive a just penalty, proportionate to its wilfulness, in the Millennium, when the Son of Man shall sit upon the throne of his glory and judge the world in righteousness.

It would have been a very different matter, had these Pharisees been disciples, and had they witnessed all of his mighty works and heard all of his precious words, and had they been privately instructed as were the twelve Apostles (Matt. 13:11), and with them made partakers of Christ's holy spirit, so that, in his name and power, they themselves cast out devils and healed diseases. In this respect—that they sinned against partial, not complete, evidence—consists the difference between their sin and the sin of Judas, by which his and not theirs was mortal sin.

Their case differed, too, from that of the enlightened, consecrated and spirit-begotten sons of this Gospel age. Because of our greater enlightenment and clearer preception, such a sin on our part would mean more wilfulness because of greater intelligence. It would probably mean mortal sin to us. Even in their case the Lord saw such a wrong condition of heart that he said, "Ye hypocrites, how can ye escape the condemnation of Gehenna [symbol of the Second Death]." The intimation clearly is, that many of them, having developed such perverse characters, so out of accord with righteousness, will, even when blessed with the fuller light and opportunity of the Millennium, be likely to come under the sentence of death. **The lesson to us is, that even those who are not of the Church,** now on trial, if they have come in contact with the light, have thereby come under some responsibility. Each one is either preparing and building a character or destroying one, getting more ready or less ready to benefit by the Millennial reign of righteous judgment. Our Lord's judgment (in the day of judgment,—the Millennium), as between those who knew and those who did not know his will, was expressed pointedly when he declared that, it shall be **more tolerable** for Sodom and Gomorrah in the day of judgment than for the city that rejected the Gospel messengers; because they sinned against greater light.—See Matt. 10:15.

Whoever has heard something of the Truth has a great responsibility. Whoever has opportunity to learn more, **whether he uses it or not,** has greater responsibility. He who sins (with wilfulness) against a little light shall suffer some "stripes" or punishment. He who sins with wilfulness against more light or more opportunity for light will receive "many stripes." He who sins with complete **wilfulness** against a clear understanding of the truth has committed a full sin in the full sense of the word, and will receive the full penalty of sin—death—the Second Death.—Z. '96:119-123.

"His Way Is Perfect"

"As for God, his way is perfect: the Word of the Lord is tried: he is a buckler to all those that put their trust in him. For who is God save the Lord? or who is a rock save our God?"—Psa. 18:30, 31.

GOD'S way is his plan or purpose, that which he purposes to accomplish and which he is steadily working out according to the counsel of his own will. Men also have various plans and purposes of their own which they try to work out as nearly as possible. Some men purpose to amass a fortune; some to acquire a liberal education and vastly to increase their mental capacity and power; others to gain fame and popular applause, or social or political preferment, etc., etc. But to most men the way they choose proves unsatisfactory after a brief trial, and they turn restlessly from one way to another; and even when they pursue one way to the end they realize that it has been an unsatisfactory way and that the end is not worthy of the strife necessary to gain it. . . .

But, "As for God, his way is perfect;" and his Word clearly sets forth his way to all the simple minded ones who take him at his Word and who have no fine-spun theories of their own to establish. In coming to God's Word it is always important to remember that our attitude should be that of the disciple, and not the teacher. Such an attitude is itself a long step in the direction of a knowledge of the truth; for it is written that God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace to the humble. (James 4:6.) If we come to his Word as reverent students, expecting to find therein the delineation of the pure and righteous character and plan of our God, that plan and character will be revealed to us; but if we come to it in a captious spirit and with impure and unholy thoughts and ambitions, we have just the kind of poor imperfect brains that can warp and twist the Scriptures to suit our own ideas. If we put on the colored glasses of prejudice we can read God's Word as seen through them only.

And this is what the Psalmist implied when he said, "With the merciful thou wilt show thyself merciful; with an upright man thou wilt show thyself upright; with the pure thou wilt show thyself pure; and with the froward thou wilt show thyself froward. For thou wilt save the humbled people, but wilt bring down high looks." (Psa. 18:25-27.) And again we read, "A scorner seeketh wisdom and findeth it not, but knowledge is easy unto him that understandeth;" and, "There is a way which seemeth right unto a man, but the end thereof are the ways of death."—Prov. 14:6, 12.

O! how we need to beware of "high looks" and of the pride that goeth before destruction and of the haughty spirit that precedeth a fall. (Prov. 16:18.) For if in pride we go about to establish our own ways, and do not fully submit ourselves to the right ways of the Lord, we will surely deceive ourselves and be led away by the error of the wicked, so that God's way or plan, as viewed through the colored glasses of our ambitions and prejudices, will seem to our distorted vision as the Psalmist describes—unmerciful, impure and perverse, instead of as it really is—merciful and holy and righteous altogether. There is nothing more dangerous than pride, whether it be manifested in a love of display or in ambitions to be great or to be thought well of by others. If we are ambitious to be more generous than God; . . . or if we ignore God's appointed means of salvation; . . . or if we seek out any human invention contrary to the Word of God, and go about to establish it, it is pride that is asserting itself; and if it is not promptly humbled it will surely and shortly end in complete alienation from God.

Dearly beloved, let us fear lest a promise being left us of entering into God's rest—into the rest of abiding faith in his way, his glorious plan—any of us should come short of it, and instead of calmly and confidently resting in God's way and in the blessed hope of its glorious outcome, we be left in confusion and doubt upon the whole subject.

But if you have thus far stood firmly in the faith of God's way, we are persuaded better things; and if with the Psalmist you can say, "My heart is fixed, O God, my heart is fixed" (Psa. 57:7); if your heart is established in love and reverence and faith in the sure Word of God, then with the Psalmist you may also say, "For thou wilt light my candle: the Lord my God will enlighten my darkness." (Psa. 18:28.) Yea, has it not been even so? Surely hitherto the Lord hath led us. The language of the prophet applies to all those humble and faithful ones whom the Lord has been leading—"For by thee I have run through a troop [of opposing enemies]; and by my God have I leaped over a wall" [of bondage, into the glorious liberty of a son of God].—Psa. 18:29.

Beloved, have you been thus overcoming? have you been following the Lord's leading? have you found and are you still abiding in the sweet rest of faith in his plan, in his way, not your own? "As for God, his way is perfect;" it is just and merciful and benevolent and wise and practicable and sure of a glorious termination. "The Word of the Lord is tried;" when fully understood it will stand the test of every argument that could be formed against it as to its justice, its wisdom or its benevolence. Of this we are fully assured by our Lord, who prophetically declared that the testimony of those who come to a full knowledge of God's plan will be —"Great and marvelous are thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true are thy ways, thou King of saints."—Rev. 15:3.

"The Lord is a buckler [a defence] to all those that trust in him; for who is God [is mighty] save the Lord? or who is a rock [a safe anchorage to our souls] save our God?" There is no other one to whom we may anchor our faith and hope; but, securely anchored to him, we may trust and not be afraid, and may sweetly rest under the shadow of his wing. "The Lord liveth; and blessed be our rock; and let the Lord of our salvation be exalted." —Z. '92:371-373.

Grapes Off a Bramble Bush

"Be ye doers of the Word and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves."—Jas. 1:22.

WHILE the Scriptures forbid God's people to judge one another, they do commend to us another kind of judging. We are not to judge in the sense of condemning, sentencing, etc., those who claim to be honest, sincere, reverential, merely because they differ from what we would expect; God knows their hearts and to his own Master each servant must stand or fall eventually.

But while not condemning the heart we are to judge of the outward conduct. The parable which our Lord in this lesson gives respecting the gathering of grapes from bramble bushes illustrates this point. God's people are likened to the grape-vine, which produces no thorns but luscious clusters of fruit. Mankind in general are likened to bramble bushes, ready to scratch, tear, injure, on the slightest provocation, and are merely self-sustaining, not bringing forth fruitage that would be a blessing to others. We are to distinguish between such characters and God's people: "By their fruits shall ye know them."

It is said that at times a bramble bush will be entirely covered by a vine, so that the grapes would appear to be coming from the bush. We are not to be mistaken. A good tree cannot bring forth an evil fruitage, neither can an injurious tree bring forth a good fruitage. The lesson, applied to humanity, is that those who are really God's people cannot live injurious lives or fruitless lives; they must be fruit-bearing else they are none of His. And should we find some of the fruits of the spirit commingling with a thorniness of life, an evil, injurious disposition, we are to assume that in some sense of the word the fruitage is merely put on and does not belong to the bramble-bush character.

It is therefore useless for any man to tell us that he has given his heart to the Lord in fulness of consecration and that he has received the sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit and yet find him rejoicing in sin, taking pleasure in iniquity, injustice, selfishness and a course of life injurious to his neighbors. If his heart be changed the results will be manifest in his daily life, because "out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh."—Z. '12:165.

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Men blunder and have to do their work over again. God never blunders, nor has he ever to do his work over again.—Z. '91:135.

◆

In the Royal Priesthood of "that" age the world is to have the same comfort in its priesthood that we in our present infirmities find in Christ.—Z. '02: 262.

◆

Faith is a gift of God in that it is cultivated to acceptable development by the Lord's gracious promises, rightly received, appreciated and acted upon.—Z. '01: 329.

◆

They that honor God he will honor, in his own way; and his way will always be found eventually to be the best way. We not only are to honor the Lord by word of mouth, but especially are we to show forth his praises in the affairs of life—in connection with home duties, business duties, service of the truth: in all things we are to glorify him in our bodies and spirits which are his; and those who thus do shall be blessed indeed of the Lord and be used of him. The slightest service here permitted us is an honor indeed, and faithfulness in these slight services of the present time are eventually to be blessed and rewarded with the greater and grander service of the Kingdom.—Z. '01: 318.

◆

Even a diamond surrounded by mud would cut nothing, would scratch nothing; but place a dozen diamonds together, and the more you get rid of the mud element the more gritting, scouring and cutting there is likely to be. So it is with the Lord's jewels—the more they come together, the more they get wakened up, the more opportunities there will be for friction, and the greater necessity there will be that all be thoroughly embedded in and covered with the Holy Spirit, which, like oil, is smooth and unctuous and tends to prevent friction.—Z. '12: 99.

◆

Each should remember that the Master's eye is noting his progress in Christlikeness.—Z. '13:141.

Some day, some glad, sweet day
We shall be like our blessed Lord
And see him as he is.
Soon we shall strain our
Weary eyes no more
To catch, beyond this earthly
House of fettering clay,
A gleam of heavenly glory
From his radiant face.

Some day, some fair, sweet day
His loving hand will wipe
Away our tears. His tender
Voice will thrill our souls
With rapture, when we
Hear him say, "Well done,
Dear heart, Well done,
My joy is thine; for thee
The victor's crown is won."—Z. '11:13.

◆

The more we come into possession of the spiritual blessings which the Lord has promised us, and which we have accepted by faith, the more need shall we have of humility; and **our humility will be proportionate to our appreciation** of Divine goodness and our thankfulness therefor. The grateful, thankful heart may go on from grace to grace, from strength to strength, from knowledge to knowledge, from attainment to attainment; but if gratitude begins to wane and if our advantages are accepted either as matters of our own attainment or of good luck, in that same proportion we shall find ourselves growing cold spiritually. Moreover, with unthankfulness will come unholiness, spiritual pride and self-conceit; and all of this will lead to spiritual dearth and, if persisted in, to spiritual death.—Z. '17:332.

◆

What the Lord is not pleased to give us through proper channels we should realize we would be better without.—Z. '08: 265.

◆

The Lord is the teacher of his followers, sending, now and again, of their own number, certain ones to call attention to truths being overlooked, or to injurious errors being entertained. The "meek" among the probationers will hear the Master's voice by whomsoever he speaks; and these will be guided into the truth, and prepared in due time for organization as his Kingdom. "The meek will he teach his way."—Psa. 25:9; Z. '08:120.

◆

If no trials or difficulties come to us, if our appetites or desires are never interfered with in our service to the Lord and the Truth, we may be sure that we are making some mistake. We have not become His disciples.—Z. '13:121.

◆

There is no doubt that much of the trouble in the world is the result of misunderstanding.. It therefore behooves every one of the Lord's people to "put on love, which is the bond of perfectness," and to overlook much of what others do. (Col. 3:14.) And yet it would be proper for one who thinks that he has been wronged to go to the offending brother and have a clear understanding. To do so would result favorably in nearly every case.—Z. '12: 81.

◆

God's power is Infinite, so is His love, His mercy, His goodness. Nevertheless, every wilful sin will have its punishment, a just recompense of reward, and only the willing and obedient shall have the Divine favor and everlasting life. Let each apply the lesson to himself.—Z. '12:193.

◆

The Apostle says that God tempteth no man. If we should think of God as tempting us to sin, it would be a horrible thought; for by reason of His power, none could resist what He brought to bear upon us, and we would surely be overcome. But when we know that our temptations are not from God, we know that He will help us and will not suffer us to be tempted above that we are able to bear; but that He will, with every temptation, provide a way of escape. He will protect us according to His promise, as we need protection and assistance. With this thought in our minds, we can be strong.—Z. '15:171.

◆

Disputes, in the ordinary sense of the word, are of little value and accomplish little or no good.—Z. '16:199.

◆

As one member of our body assists another member in distress, so in the Body of Christ. All the members are to bear one another up, strengthen one another, comfort one another, refresh one another, and generally to make one another ready for the glorious consummation of our hopes in the Kingdom.—Z. '08:151.

◆

"He who loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?" (1 John 4:20.) In other words, the measure of the love which fills our hearts will find expression toward our fellow-creatures who have need of our sympathy and attention, and if we show ourselves deficient here it will imply a deficiency of our love for our Creator. If, on the contrary, we are merciful to others, generous, kind, taking pleasure in doing what we can for the relief of our fellow-creatures, especially to the household of faith, this will be an indication of the spirit which our Lord will appreciate and own if it be accompanied by a trust in the precious blood of Christ. Such merciful ones of the Lord's followers shall obtain mercy at the Lord's hands. He will deal gently with them, forgiving their blemishes and weaknesses in proportion as they have this spirit of generosity, forgiveness, toward those who trespass against them.—Z. '06: 203.

◆

Temptations, trials, there must needs be: without these there would be no such thing as demonstrating or perfecting character, and the Lord proposes that only overcomers shall be joint-heirs with his Son in the Kingdom. Instead, therefore, of temptations being a sign of divine displeasure they should be regarded by us as evidences of the Lord's favor—that he still considers us worthy of being further proven; that he still has us in hand with a view to our preparation, chiseling, polishing, making ready for places in his glorious heavenly Temple. Let us learn, therefore, to rejoice in tribulation and, as the Apostle urges, let us also fear. (2 Cor. 7: 4; Heb. 4:1.) Thus between the rejoicing and the fear, and carefulness and watchfulness and prayerfulness, we shall be in that attitude which will assist us in the knowing and doing of the good and acceptable and perfect will of God.—Z. '07: 28.

◆

"Glory to God in the Highest!" God will be glorified by all the angels, by every rank of spirit beings. He will be glorified by His exalted Church, then of the Divine nature; by restored humanity, by all the intelligent creatures on every plane, in every Age! Yea, more and more glorious will be His honor as the years of eternity roll on, and as other peoples of other planets are brought into being and brought to know Him and to share His wonderful bounties and blessings, and to learn the blessedness of loving and serving Him.—Z. '14: 343.

◆

PLACE OF REFUGE

The place of hiding is the secret place of the Most High, under the shadow of the Almighty. (Psalm 91:1-9.) This secret place of the Most High, beloved, is the secret place of communion and intimate fellowship with God, through the blessed privilege of prayer and through faith in his precious Word and his promised providential care. Beautifully the poet has expressed it:

"When the storms of life are raging,
  Tempests wild on sea and land,
I will seek a place of refuge
  In the shadow of God's hand.
He will hide me, He will hide me,
  Where no harm can e'er betide me;
He will hide me, safely hide me,
  In the shadow of His hand."

Oh, how precious is this hiding place! What rest and refreshment we find in the midst of the commotion that is now upon the whole world and especially upon Christendom. We pity the poor, groaning creation. We rejoice to know that ere long God will bring order out of chaos, and peace to the people. It can come only in his own good way.—Z. '18:102.

Old Corn Gems

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Year Text

And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose.

—Romans 8:28.

If God gives peace of heart, who can upset the one who is thus in harmony with God, in whom this peace of heart is ruling? This, then, is the greatest blessing of all. And He grants this peace to those who are faithfully striving to walk in the footsteps of Jesus. We have a refuge which none but His own can know. No harm can reach us within this Shelter; no storm can shake us from our moorings, for we are securely anchored to the Rock of Ages. "And we know that ALL things work together for good to those who love God, to the called according to His purpose." (Romans 8 : 28.)

—Old Corn Gems No. 10, page 12.

As our Lord was tested in all points yet without sin, so all of these who are counted worthy to be his members must similarly stand the testing to demonstrate their characterlikeness to him and their worthiness of a share in his glorious Kingdom. Hence it does not surprise us that everywhere throughout the Scriptures, appeals are made to the Lord's people, not so much respecting what they shall do for others as what they shall do for themselves and for each other. We are not opposing the thought of doing good unto all men as we have opportunity but emphasizing the other thought that we are to do good "especially to the household of faith." We are to "build one another up in the most holy faith," we are to "lay down our lives for the brethren," we are to "comfort one another," "edify one another." In a word the Bride, the Lamb's Wife, is to "make herself ready"—not without the Bridegroom's supervision and assistance, but with it and as a part of it.—Z. '07 : 43.

◆

"LITTLE IN THINE OWN EYES"

Although Saul was tall and athletic, a wonderful man in his way, he was humble withal, as the Lord testified: "Thou wast little in thine own sight." (1 Sam. 15:17.) This is another characteristic which belongs to those whom the Lord is now choosing to be kings and priests unto God under their Lord in the Millennium. They must really be taller than their fellows in respect to character as New Creatures, even if not according to the flesh; but they must be humble, "little in their own sight." They must realize that they are not worthy of such honor, that it is only of God's grace, and that the honor thus conferred upon them is not merely for themselves, but that they may be used of the Lord in connection with the blessing which he intends to confer upon humanity in and through the Kingdom of his dear Son.—Z. '08 :198.

◆

One thought not to be lost sight of is, that in the Lord's arrangement we are the stones, he the master workman—and all the trials and difficulties and oppositions and perplexities and disappointments of our experience are the chisels and the wheels and the emery-sand for our preparation. From this standpoint only are we able to follow the Apostle's advice to rejoice in tribulations also.—Z. '05 : 316.

◆

The Father's house, his church, should be composed solely of those who worship him in spirit and in truth. It is meet, it is proper, that all others should be cast out; and the Lord will see to this now because the due time for it has come. The sanctuary shall be cleansed. Then in due time the glory of the Lord will fill it.—Z. '18 : 93.

◆

The heart is the most vital organ to the New Creature. The necessity for keeping the heart cannot be overstated. If, then, one finds bitterness arising in his heart, regardless of the cause he should take it at once as a warning that he is not arming himself with the mind of Christ, and not properly using the armor. Failing to arm himself thus he would not be able to withstand the assaults of the adversaries. See 1 Thess. 3 : 8. Z. '18 : 22.

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OLD CORN GEMS

NUMBER SEVENTY-TWO

"And they did eat of the OLD CORN of the land on the morrow after the Passover . . . and the manna ceased on the morrow after they had eaten of the OLD CORN of the land; neither had the children of Israel manna any more; but they did eat of the fruit of the land of Canaan that year." Joshua 5:11-12.

A SAFE RULE

"WHERE A BROTHER GIVES AN INTERPRETATION OF A SCRIPTURE WHICH DIFFERS FROM THAT GIVEN BY BROTHER RUSSELL, AND BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION SEEMS REASONABLE AND IN HARMONY WITH THE PLAN OF GOD, THEN WE BELIEVE IT A SAFE RULE TO FOLLOW BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION, FOR THE REASON THAT HE IS THE SERVANT OF THE CHURCH, SO CONSTITUTED BY THE LORD FOR THE LAODICEAN PERIOD; AND THEREFORE WE SHOULD EXPECT THE LORD TO TEACH US THROUGH HIM. WHERE THERE ARISES A DOUBT IN THE MIND AS TO WHICH INTERPRETATION IS CORRECT, THEN IT IS ALWAYS SAFER TO RESOLVE THAT DOUBT IN FAVOR OF BROTHER RUSSELL'S INTERPRETATION. WE BELIEVE SUCH TO BE IN HARMONY WITH THE LORD'S WILL." Z. '18:51.

1922

Happy New Year

WE wish our readers, all and everywhere, a very happy New Year—1922. . . .

Circumstances may change, hopes or health may fail, trusted friends may become cool or even become enemies, poverty and lack of life's necessities may stare some in the face; yet none of these, nor all of them, should they fall to our lot, need hinder the true Christian from having a happy year.

To the worldly this will be both impossible and incomprehensible: for the world has no sources of comfort and peace and joy other than the creature-comforts of the present life. When deprived of these they have nothing but misery and despair; and these evils are only increased as knowledge and refinement increase the appreciation of earthly good things. . . .

But the child of God has other than earthly friends and joys and hopes and prospects. He is **rich,** whatever his outward condition may appear; rich in the fact that his debt of sin has been paid for him; rich in the assurances of God's Word that his present experiences are all under the supervision of divine wisdom and love, and are all being overruled for his highest good (ROMANS 8:28); rich in joy and hope through the present trials and experiences faithfully and patiently endured. God is preparing him for future honors, and so he is enabled to reckon those trials which once would have utterly crushed him as "light afflictions which are but for a moment," and which, faithfully accepted, "will work out a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory." Thus he looks, not at the transitory things that are seen, but at the invisible and eternal things. Thus, like Moses of old, he endures as seeing him who is invisible, a present help in every time of trouble. Whatever he may possess of earthly luxury and comfort he accepts with gratitude, realizing himself not more deserving than millions less favored. Whatever he may lack, he reflects that the faithful of every age have been required to "endure hardness as good soldiers," and that our blessed Savior and his noble apostles, in choosing the course of faithfulness to the truth, denied themselves and endured hungerings, thirstings, privations and loss of friends, and yet, though poor, they made many rich (2 Cor. 6:10) with the true riches of grace—"godliness with contentment," "great gain," which the world can neither give, nor take away. In every condition these may hear the Word of God saying,—"All things are yours, . . . for ye are Christ's, and Christ is God's"

"Why should the children of the King
Go mourning all their days?"

The Christian's secret of a happy life lies in his **knowing** and **trusting** the Heavenly Father and the Heavenly Bridegroom. . . . They have heard the voice saying,—

Cast all your care upon the Lord, for he careth for you.—1 Pet. 5:7.

Behold, what manner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God.—1 John 3:1.

Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear (reverence) him.—Psa. 103:13.

Be of good courage, and he shall strengthen your heart.—Psa. 31:24.

The Lord is my Shepherd, I shall not want: His goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the Lord forever.—Psa. 23:6.

True, the exceeding great and precious promises of God's Word may not hinder us from feeling pain, but it will modify the severity of the pain and its frequency. Physicians are of one opinion on this subject, that the mind, the brain, the nervous center of our being, exercises a great influence over all of our physical sensations, either an aggravating or a pacifying influence. Truly did Solomon, the wise, say that the Lord's word is a valuable "medicine."—Prov. 3:8.

But we have said that these blessings come through **knowing and trusting** God: some fail to get the blessings because of a lack of knowledge: others having the knowledge lack the trust, the faith: still others, and they are probably in the majority among consecrated Christians, enjoy a small measure of these blessings when they might have them in abundant measure by a more thorough knowledge of God through his Word (accompanied, of course, with obedience to the spirit of their knowledge) and by the exercise of greater trust in the Faithful Promiser.

We exhort all the **consecrated** readers to join with us at the beginning of the New Year, in a remembrance and renewal of our covenant with the Lord,—to be obediently and lovingly **his**, in thought, word and deed.—Z. '97:3, 4.

Thoughts for the New Year

THE dawn of another new year is properly a time for solemn reflections, both retrospective and prospective. In the retrospect how abundant is the cause for thanksgiving! We who have been blessed with the richest favors of divine grace in that knowledge of divine truth which reveals to us the high privilege of becoming sons and heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Jesus Christ to an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for the called and chosen and faithful according to his purpose, have a never-failing cause for deepest gratitude. Great indeed was the favor which revealed to us the hope of everlasting life as justified, human sons of God—of full restitution to the divine favor and likeness, as was at first possessed by our father Adam. And great was our joy when first, by faith, we appropriated this precious promise and realized that legally, through merit of the precious blood of Christ shed for our redemption, we had passed from death unto life, and that in God's appointed time the everlasting treasure with all its attendant glory and blessing would be ours. But beyond even this are the "**exceeding great and precious promises**" to those of this justified class who have been called, according to God's purpose, to become the bride and joint-heir of his dear Son.

Then, in addition to all these blessings of hope and promise, was the blessed realization during all the year, and with some of us for many years past, that though we walk through the valley of the shadow of death, as the Psalmist aptly represents the present life, our blessed Shepherd's rod and staff have been our comfort and our safeguard. How often has the friendly crook of the Shepherd's staff stayed us from wandering off into by-paths and kept us in the narrow way; how his chastening rod has from time to time aroused us from dreamy lethargy and urged us on our way. And at such times we have recalled the comforting words: "My son, despise not thou the chastening of the Lord, nor faint when thou are rebuked of him; for whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth. If ye endure chastening, God dealeth with you as with sons; for what son is he whom the father chasteneth not? But if ye be without chastisement, whereof all are partakers, then are ye bastards and not sons."—Heb. 12:5-8.

"Thou Spreadest My Table in the Midst of Enemies."

Spiritually, we have feasted on the bounties of divine favor; while in things temporal, under whatsoever circumstances we have been placed, having the assurance that **all things work together for good to them that love God,** we have realized that godliness with contentment is great gain, having promise of the life that now is [so long as God wills to have us remain here], and also of that which is to come. Wherefore, we can and do most heartily "offer unto God thanksgiving." And shall we not render unto him, not only the praise of our lips, but also the incense of truly consecrated lives, throughout the year upon which we are just entering? Dearly beloved, consecrate yourselves anew to the Lord today—not in the sense of invalidating the consecration made once for all, possibly many years ago, but rather in the sense of re-affirming and emphasizing that covenant. Tell the dear Lord that you consider yourselves entirely his, and that it is still your purpose to keep your all upon the altar of sacrifice during this new year until it is wholly consumed in his service. Then let us proceed with studious care from day to day to pay these, our vows of full consecration, unto the Most High.

As we look back and with sorrow view the imperfections of even our best efforts, and then forward and see the lion-like difficulties that seem to obstruct our onward course, we will need greatly to reinforce our waning courage with the special promises of divine grace to help in every time of need. We have the blessed assurance that "the Lord will give strength unto his people." "Call upon me in the day of trouble," he says, "and I will deliver thee, and thou shalt glorify me." As soldiers under our great Captain, we have enlisted in no uncertain struggle, except our own faint-heartedness or unfaithfulness should make it so. We are fully supplied with the whole armor of God, and will be amply protected against all the fiery darts of the adversary if we accept it and carefully buckle it on; we are forewarned of all the snares and dangers that beset our onward way, so that we may avoid and overcome them; we are fully informed as to the policy and course of the Captain under whose banner we have enlisted, and of the part we are to take under his leading. We have his constant presence with us, even to the end of our course. His inspiring voice may always be heard above the clash and din of battle—Fear not, it is your Father's good pleasure to give you the kingdom! Be of good cheer; I have overcome! Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid! Greater is he that is for you than all they that be against you. If we are weak and incline to faint-heartedness we have only to remember the blessed promise, "The Lord will give strength unto his people;" and by our faithfulness in the service we shall glorify God and he will deliver us gloriously from all our foes, both seen and unseen.

How Shall We Pay Our Vows?

This is an important question with all the truly consecrated, and one surely of paramount importance. Let us consider, then, that when we consecrated ourselves fully to the Lord, we thereby signified that we would hold nothing back for self. That consecration included all our possessions, our time, our physical energies and our mental attainments. And it implied the sacrifice of all our former earthly ambitions, hopes and aims, so that we should no longer pursue them to any extent. This, and nothing less, is what our vow of full consecration signifies. But it signifies, further, that these possessions or personal qualifications, which the Lord terms talents, are not only to be released from the service of the worldly ambitions, etc., but that they are to be so released, not for aimless inactivity, but for the purpose of being utilized in an opposite direction—in the service of God, of his plan and of his children.

In the parable of the talents (Matt. 25:14-30) the Lord illustrated very clearly how we are expected to pay our vows of consecration to the Most High. He says: "It is like a man who, intending to travel, called his own servants and delivered unto them his goods. And to one he gave five talents, to another two, and to another one; to each according to his respective capacity; and straightway took his journey."

To Each According to Ability

This master had important and valuable interests to leave in charge of his servants; and as these servants had all engaged to serve him, he had a right to expect of them a sincere and faithful interest in the work. Yet he did not expect more of them than they were severally able to accomplish. He rightly expected larger returns from the one who had five talents than from those who had one or two talents. And in the reckoning, it will be observed that the servant who had doubled his two talents was just as highly commended as the one who had doubled his five. The reply to each was the same—"Well done, good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things; I will make thee ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord." And had the servant with the one talent been similarly faithful he would have received the very same commendation. Notice also that the parable does not represent the obligations of the world of mankind in the use of their talents, but merely of **"his own servants"**—the consecrated believers only. And notice also that no servant was left without some talent of usefulness and responsibility. Each servant had **at least** one talent; and for the right use of that one talent he was just as accountable to his master as were those who had more.

But the professed servant with the one talent was unfaithful to his master, and yet he evidently wanted to be considered a servant still, and probably thought he was worthy of commendation and reward for not perverting his Lord's money to other uses. He had taken good care of the talent; he had not turned it in opposition to the Lord, but he had simply buried it—failed to use it. At the reckoning time, he who had received the one talent said, "Lord, I knew thee, that thou art an exacting man, reaping where thou hast not sown, and gathering where thou hast not scattered. And I was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth; lo, there thou hast thine own."

"His Lord answered and said unto him, Thou wicked and slothful servant, thou knewest that I reap where I sowed not, and gather where I have not scattered; thou oughtest therefore to have put my money to the exchangers; and then at my coming I should have received mine own with interest." It will be observed that this servant was not what men would generally call wicked. He was simply an idler, willing, if he could, to draw a servant's approval and compensation, but lacking any real, active interest in his master's business. He had no ill will toward his master; he was probably very glad that the other servants kept the business from going to wreck and ruin; he did nothing to hinder them from using their talents, but he did not feel the responsibility he had assumed in becoming a "servant," nor take a proper interest in his master's affairs. Yet, as a faithless, slothful servant, he was really a covenant-breaker, and therefore "wicked" and certainly unfit to be trusted with still greater responsibilities on the master's return.

But let us remember that this was not a real case: it was simply a parable used to illustrate real cases. And if the illustration fits your individual case, let it not lose its effect upon you. The very object of the parable is to arouse such to a sense of their short-comings, and to recover them from the lethargy into which they have relaxed, by reminding them of their **responsibilities**. Activity in the Lord's service to the full extent of our ability or talents is what the Lord has a right to expect of all who profess to be his servants; and it is what he **does expect**. Therefore, if you have but one talent, do not bury it, but cultivate and use it; do what you can, and all you can, in the great work to which we have already consecrated our lives.

Much Given, Much Required

And those who have several talents, let them see to it that they too are faithful to the extent of their abilities, not being content to do merely what the one-talented man can do or ought to do. Such a one would not be a good and faithful servant, and could not expect the Master's approving "Well done!" His approval will be given to those only who are faithful to the extent of their opportunity.

Those who find the truth and make the consecration before they are encumbered with the cares of this life, who have no families dependent upon them and who have a reasonable degree of health, have at least two talents—time and health—which can and ought to be utilized in the service to the best possible advantage. Then there are those who have a money talent, or a business talent, and such should consider how these are being used. Are they largely swallowed up in luxuries, or a superabundance of the good things of this life, for either self or family? Or are they being laid up as treasures upon earth—in banks, store-houses and investment securities, to enrich and to cultivate the spirit of pride in friends or children, and for them to quarrel over after you are dead?

Our talents for use in the Lord's service consist of all those things and opportunities which are over and above what we need for the necessary and reasonable maintenance of ourselves or our families, if we have families, and the reasonable provision against distress in case of a sudden calamity or approaching old age, etc. Aside from these, all we have should be in active service, be they many talents or few. If we have five talents and are using only one or two, how can we expect the Master's "Well done, good and faithful servant"? Did we not covenant to give and to use **all** for him?—all our money, all our time, all our influence, all our mental activity, all our physical ability? How faithful have we been during the past year? How do we stand at the bar of our own judgment? And how faithful will we be during the coming year? After providing things decent and honest for ourselves and those dependent upon us, let us judiciously appropriate our talents to what we profess to consider the chief business of life. Here are the testing points of true loyalty and devotion. Let us ponder them well, and not lightly set them aside.

Former Opportunities Lost

But observe further what the Lord has to say about this "wicked and slothful servant." He says: "Take the talent from him and give it unto him which hath ten talents; for unto every one that hath [made use of his talents] shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him that hath not [made use of his talent] shall be taken away even that which he hath. And cast ye the unprofitable servant into **outer darkness**: there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth." The outer darkness here referred to is in contrast with the inner light of the holy place of favor and communion and instruction from God, symbolized in the Tabernacle. The testing comes on the return of the Master. Then the faithful servants shall enter into fuller joys and privileges and blessings, while the unfaithful will go into the outer darkness of error and ignorance concerning God's plans and ways, which envelops the world in general, and their neglected opportunities for more abundant service will go as a reward to those who are already earnest and active, and whose earnest and faithful labors will in due time be abundantly rewarded.

As we thus view our Lord's teaching, we see that our only security as sons of God and joint-heirs with Christ is in activity in the service of the truth. Well, says one, I see very few doing that. Very true: **only a few will do it.** But that precious few are the Lord's jewels. Are you one of them? Ah, that is the point to be considered. No matter how few they are, or whether you ever saw or knew of any such, that does not alter the conditions of our calling. "This is the way: walk ye in it." One, at least, has trodden it before. Look for his footprints and follow him, and "He will give strength unto his people," even though they walk alone, as he did, without the cheering companionship of fellow-travelers.

"Lo, I Am With You"

But think not that you are traveling alone in this narrow way. The Lord has now a consecrated people, a faithful band of servants who, with every talent consecrated, are steadily pursuing their course in the narrow way. We know some of them by name and by character and by their steady and progressive activity in the blessed work. Not many of them have five talents, but a good many have two or three, and some only one. Quietly and unobtrusively they go about from day to day, and God is with them and is leading them on. Their hearts are full of joy and hope and they are kept securely amidst all the perils of this evil day. None are so clear in their apprehension and appreciation of truth as those who are fully enlisted in its service. Let all look well to their zeal and activity in the Lord's work. If we bury our one or our many talents under a weight of worldly cares and encumbrances which might be avoided or set aside; if we bury them under worldly ambitions for either self or family—whether this be by wasting consecrated time upon science, philosophy, music or art; or upon business, politics or pleasures; or in pampering pride and appetite—then as unfaithful servants we will sooner or later go into outer darkness, by being caught in some of the snares of this "evil day," and will be led farther and farther into error and away from truth.

Mark well that it is not a case of such unfaithful servants being **liable** to get into outer darkness, into error: it is a case of **must.** The Master's orders are peremptory and decisive: **"Cast the unprofitable** servant into outer darkness." The light now shining is **not for** the unfaithful, but for the faithful servants; and no matter how clearly the unfaithful may have seen and understood the deep things of God, and no matter how he may have enjoyed them, if he has not loved them so as to serve them and **sacrifice his conveniences** for them, he is unworthy of them and **must** go out into the outer darkness of the world in general. With these as with the world the disappointment of theories and plans in the great time of trouble will ere long bring the weeping and gnashing of teeth foretold.

Faithfulness Implies Activity

It is indeed a notable fact that in no single case have we seen one drift away from the truth into the snares of these perilous times who was very active and fully enlisted in the Lord's work. To such the Lord says, "My grace is sufficient for thee"—"Ye shall never fall, for so an abundant entrance shall be ministered unto you into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord Jesus Christ."

Let us, then, dearly beloved, have for our watchword during the year the word "devotion," and let each of us write upon his heart the gracious promise—"The Lord will give **strength** unto his people." Let us be faithfully "his people," and let us earnestly desire and faithfully use the strength promised. Faithful is he that hath promised, who also will do it. So, then, if you lack the strength to use faithfully your talent, the fault is yours, not God's. You either have not his service close enough at heart or else do not make use of the strength he provides. "The Lord will give strength unto **his people**"—his trusting, faithful servants—those who are using to his praise the talents consecrated to their master, however many or few those talents may be.

Our New Year's greeting is, "God bless you."—Z. '06:3-6.

"God Bless You"

1922 **1922**

A General View of the Messianic Kingdom

"And I John saw the Holy City, New Jerusalem, coming down from God out of Heaven."—Rev. 21:2.

THROUGH the Prophet Daniel and others, the Divine promise was given to Israel that at some future time the God of Heaven would set up a Kingdom on the earth; that this Kingdom would be world-wide—"under the whole heaven"; and that it would last forever. (Dan. 2:44; 7:27; Isa. 2:2-4; etc.) This Messianic Kingdom is to be established to meet the exigencies of the case of fallen humanity and to bring mankind back into harmony with the Divine arrangements. This Kingdom will intervene between the Divine Government and mankind, because the fallen race of Adam in its weak condition is unable to meet the requirements of the Divine Law.

The great Emperor of the Universe, Jehovah, has given the Messianic Kingdom to our Lord Jesus, who was the first representative of that Kingdom. While on earth, our Lord was treated with violence and ignominy. All down the Gospel Age, His disciples have been used in a similar manner. Yet the Kingdom which they represent will **surely** be established. Already the Father has appointed our Lord as King (Psa. 2:6), and will soon deliver to Him the power and glory of His office.

The object and purpose of this Kingdom is clearly set forth in the Scriptures. When it shall have been established, some of its subjects will be asleep in death and others will be awake. At that time none of the fallen race will be recognized of God as having any life whatever. The control of the whole world will be in the hands of our Lord, as the One who purchased it with His own precious blood, and who is competent to bless it, according to the promise made four thousand years ago to Abraham, that in him and in his Seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.—Gen. 12:3; 22:18; Gal. 3:8, 16, 29.

The Kingdom of Heaven, as foretold by our Lord, will come about without manifestation—outward show. (Luke 17:20, margin.) But with all these suggestions, let us not suppose that the Kingdom is to be an earthly government. On the contrary, the Scriptures instruct us that those who inherit it must become spirit beings before they can enter into it. (1 Cor. 15:50-52.) The living members will all be changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, and the dead members must be raised to receive their change before they can be forever with the Lord.

The Lord and the glorified Church will all be spirit beings, fully able to administer the world's affairs and yet be unseen by mankind. They will be manifest in the rewards, punishments and judgments of that Day. The difference between the King and the Kingdom is, that the King is the person who has authority; but the Kingdom includes both His dominion and His associates. In this case the latter are the Church, who will sit with Him in His Throne.

The Church will always be in the **heavenly condition**. Nothing in the Scriptures indicates that she will be restricted to **one place** rather than to another. The intimation is that after the Church has experienced her change, she will be absent from the earth for a while and will be brought into the presence of Jehovah, the great King. She will be arrayed in glorious clothing of wrought gold—"in raiment of needlework." (Psa. 45:13-15.) These statements are figurative expressions indicative of the beautiful character wrought out in all who become actual members of the Body of Christ.

The Seat of Divine Government

Whether the New Creation are afar off or on the earth, they will ever be of the spirit nature. Their particular place is on the Divine plane. The various orders of spirit beings have each its own sphere, but the Church of Christ has no place among them. She is invited to occupy a position next to her Lord, who is on the right hand of the Majesty on High (Heb. 1:3)—higher than all other planes of spirit being.

At the time of the First Advent, this place had not been prepared for the Church, although the Father evidently had it in mind. Our Lord ascended on High in order to prepare that place. (John 14:2, 3.) This He did by making an imputation of His merit on behalf of the Church, thereby permitting them to become participators with Him in the sufferings of the present Age, that they may also become sharers with Him in the glories to follow. Thus He has prepared the way for the Church to enter the highest of all planes.

We are not sufficiently informed respecting the spirit condition to know just how possible it will be for the Lord and the Church to remain in the Father's presence and at the same time maintain the government of the earth. While this may be possible, yet perhaps it may not be a wise arrangement. Perhaps it will be necessary for them to be absent from the immediate presence of the Father, and approximate the earth.

Our thought is that The Christ will be very closely associated with the earth, just as Satan's kingdom is. Satan's seat of government is in Tartarus—the atmosphere. He and his associates, the fallen angels, are near the earth, whither they were cast down, separated from their own plane because of sin. They are invisible to mankind, however, amongst whom they have done an evil work. Satan has also his human agents—wicked men and women, who are under his control, sometimes through ignorance and superstition, and sometimes through mesmeric influence. The Scriptures inform us, however, that shortly Satan is to be bound for a thousand years; and the place which he has occupied will then be vacant.—Rev. 20:1-3.

St. Paul informs us that the Church is to be caught up to meet the Lord in the air, during the time of His Second Advent. (1 Thess. 4:15-17.) This does not necessarily mean, however, that they will occupy Tartarus. We are told that they will be forever with the Lord; wherever He is, there the Church will be also, in harmony with the Divine will and executing the Divine purposes. Men will not see the Lord and the Church, even as they do not see Satan and the fallen angels. The Christ will be very closely associated with the earth—as before intimated—though invisible to mortal eyes. They will be doing a good work, a powerful work on the spirit plane. They will be kings and priests unto our God, and they shall reign on the earth.—Rev. 5:10.

With The Christ will be various agencies. The Great Company will undoubtedly be associated with them. Then there will be the earthly agents, just as Satan has his assistants. These agents of The Christ will be the faithful Ancient Worthies, who will render intelligent and willing service in the Kingdom of Messiah.

Future Sufferings of the Ancient Worthies

In Isaiah 11:9, the statement is made: "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy Mountain." Comparing Daniel 2:35 with verses 44 and 45 of the same chapter, we perceive that in prophecy a mountain is the symbol for a kingdom. Isaiah's statement, therefore, seems to imply that under the Messianic Kingdom there will be a restraint placed upon all who do wrong. At the same time we are to remember Daniel's statement that the Kingdom is to **grow**. The prophecy is that the stone **became** a great Mountain and filled the whole earth. Many years will doubtless pass before the prophecy will be fulfilled.

As soon as the Kingdom shall have been set up in power, the Ancient Worthies will be raised from the dead as perfect human beings. Psa. 45:16 evidently refers to these faithful servants of God, who are to be princes in all the earth. Presumably they will have a great work of instruction to do for the rest of humanity. While they will have this service to perform, nevertheless they will have great honor in doing it; for it is always an honor to serve the Lord.

The service which the Ancient Worthies will be given will be more than God would ordinarily entrust to a perfect human being. It will be a part of this service to deal with the imperfect, fallen creatures and to help them up out of sin and imperfection. While in one sense of the word this work is desirable, yet it is not what a perfect human being would prefer. These Ancient Worthies will come forth from the tomb perfect; but during the entire Millennium, they will be amidst imperfect surroundings. The world of mankind will be imperfect then as now, although gradually these imperfections will come to an end.

Adam was created perfect. After he had sinned, he was cast out of Eden to delve in the imperfect earth, and to struggle with the thorns and thistles until he returned to the dust, whence he was taken. Surely he must have suffered because of his surroundings. Our Lord Jesus was perfect. Not only did He leave the Heavenly glory, but for thirty-three and a half years He was amidst imperfect surroundings, constantly witnessing the pain and sorrow of the fallen race. To be in such surroundings must have comprised a large share of His sacrifice; for the fact that He was perfect would increase His sufferings.

In the case of the Ancient Worthies, who, as perfect human beings, will be in an imperfect environment for a thousand years, it would seem as if they will undergo much suffering. Knowing what we do of our Heavenly Father, we are inclined to believe that, if they are faithful in serving the Almighty, He will abundantly reward them, more than they could have asked. Should any one inquire, What reward will the Father give them, if they maintain their obedience? we answer, During the Millennium they will receive no special reward for their service, so far as we can see; but we think that from God's standpoint, theirs will be a meritorious service which He will be pleased to reward. This seems to be His method of dealing with His faithful servants. Although our Lord Jesus delighted to do the Father's will, yet God rewarded Him. Our God is gracious!

We cannot think of any greater reward than to bestow the spirit nature upon these faithful Ancient Worthies. Long ago they proved their loyalty by choosing to suffer rather than to indulge in sin. There is nothing in the Scriptures, however, which says distinctly that they will ever be made spirit beings. Whatever we may suggest on this subject is purely inferential.

Future Reward of the Faithful Princes

A part of the evidence leading to the deduction that the Ancient Worthies will be made sharers of the spirit nature . . . is built upon the fact that they seem to be represented typically by the tribe of Levi. The fact that this tribe had no inheritance in the land seems to imply that the Ancient Worthies will have no earthly inheritance. We might think that their exaltation to be princes in all the earth (Psa. 45:16) would be an abundant reward; but inasmuch as God will give the spirit nature to the Great Company, who passed through no more severe experiences than did the Ancient Worthies, and inasmuch as the lowest form of life on the spirit plane is higher than the highest form on the human plane, it follows that the Great Company would receive at the hands of the Lord a greater blessing than would the Ancient Worthies.

Since the Heavenly Father has been pleased to arrange for the Great Company a place on the spirit plane, and since He is operating according to some general principles of righteousness, we are inclined to think that He may have something more for the Ancient Worthies than will come to the remainder of mankind. So far as we can perceive, the Great Company have not demonstrated that they are any more loyal to Him than were the faithful Ancient Worthies. When Abraham was called upon to offer up his son Isaac, he exhibited a degree of loyalty greater than the Great Company will be called upon to manifest.

Furthermore, in Gen. 17:8, God said unto Abraham, "And I will give unto thee and to thy seed **after thee,** the land wherein thou art a stranger, all the land of Canaan, for an everlasting possession; and I will be their God." Two thousand years later, St. Stephen said that God never gave Abraham so much as a foot of the promised land (Acts 7:5); but he implied that Abraham will yet receive that land and afterward **leave it to his posterity.** If the **land** is to be given to Abraham and his coadjutors, and then to be **left to his seed** and mankind in general, the thought would seem to be implied that the Ancient Worthies will pass to the spirit nature.

This same thought seems to be pictured in the Revelation. At the end of the thousand years, Satan will be loosed, that he may go forward to test the people that are on the earth, to manifest to what extent their hearts are loyal to God and to the principles of righteousness. The result of this test will be that some will fall away.—Rev. 20:7-10.

We read, "And they went up on the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city; and fire came down from God out of Heaven, and devoured them. (Rev. 20:9.) The "beloved city" is the New Jerusalem, the Church in glory, not the church in the flesh. The rebellion incited by Satan will be not only against the earthly princes, but also against The Christ.

By that time having reached perfection of organism and powers, the people will assert themselves in thus going up to encompass the camp of the saints. That the Church cannot be meant is evident from the fact that human beings could not attack an unseen force of spirit beings, as the Church will then be. Just as in Great Britain, the people have gone to Parliament to protest, so the rebellious faction of mankind will protest against their faithful princes. We fancy that we hear them say, "It is time that this government was turned over to us. We protest against your remaining in power any longer." In rebelling against the earthly phase of Messiah's Kingdom, however, they are rebelling against the Lord. Consequently Divine judgment will overtake them—"fire from Heaven."

Since this rebellion is to occur at the close of the Millennial Age, and since mankind will at that time have reached perfection, therefore, this separation of the Ancient Worthies from the rest of the world seems to imply that God has some special purpose in respect to them. The term **camp** itself implies that theirs is only a **temporary** condition or arrangement, and that God has some better thing in store for them.

If our surmise that the Ancient Worthies will some day attain the spirit nature be true, we can readily see that it will not be necessary for them to die in order to attain that plane of existence. If those members of the Body of Christ, who are living in the time of His Second Presence can be changed "in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye," so could the Ancient Worthies have their change. If they were thus changed from the human plane to the spirit plane, they would be exchanging a perfect human nature for a perfect spirit nature as a reward for faithfulness in the service of the Lord.

The Glory of the Lord the Laudable Ambition in the Kingdom

Under the beneficent rule of the Kingdom, we may be very sure that the Lord's arrangement will be an equitable one—a fair chance for every one of the human race. It is reasonable to suppose that the general line laid down in the Scriptures will be followed respecting the earth. It is written, "The earth hath He given to the children of men." (Psa. 115:16.) The race as a whole will have possession of the earth. God has not made any allotments. Every man will have a share in the commonwealth.

The changes will come about gradually. There will be inequalities of brain and muscle: but the Kingdom will even up these differences. There will always be some kind of incentive to energy. Either there will be an impetus of some sort, or else there will be some sort of punishment to help people along. The Lord will hold out certain inducements to those who are willing to co-operate along the line of advancement, and will impose stripes, punishments, to assist those who will not be induced otherwise. Both rewards and punishments will be in operation during the Millennium.

Looking back over the history of the world, we see that selfishness has been a great evil; yet at the same time it has worked wonders. If it were not for ambition and acquisitiveness, man would not be much above the animals. We are, therefore, to consider these qualities to be great blessings, when rightly exercised. Under the rule of the Kingdom, all possible blessings of mind and body will be held out to the obedient, so that the trend of selfishness will be offset by a more laudable ambition than at present; and as mind and body develop, the standards of humanity will rise higher, and selfishness will be more and more seen to be contemptible. When perfection is attained, everything will be done for the glory of the Lord rather than for earthly name and fame.

Gradually all mankind will come into fellowship with the Kingdom, and indirectly become associated with the Kingdom itself. Just as any good man helps the government, so all mankind will be blessed in proportion as they approve and uphold the Divine arrangements. Thus the Kingdom will be spreading for the thousand years, not only from one individual to another, but gradually back to full perfection. We read that "of the increase of His government and peace there shall be no end." (Isa. 9:7.) It will conquer everything before it; nothing shall stop it. After every evil thing has been destroyed, every creature in Heaven and in earth will be heard praising God. (Rev. 5:13.) Every knee shall bow and every tongue confess (Phil. 2:10, 11), and His Kingdom shall be without an opponent "from the river unto the ends of the earth."—Psa. 72:8.

Future Work of the Christ

After the thousand years shall have been finished, the Kingdom will cease in the sense that Christ will deliver the authority over to the Father. (1 Cor. 15:24.) This will not mean, however, that law and order will be disregarded as they have been during the reign of sin and death. The Messianic Kingdom will by that time have helped mankind out of their fallen condition; and therefore it is the Divine purpose that Messiah relinquish this subordinate Kingdom, in order that it may merge into the Empire of the Great Jehovah, of which it will ever after be a part.

Justice then will operate. Mercy will no longer be required; and the Heavenly Father will not then be pictured as a merciful King to His creatures. They will by that time be perfect so that they will need no mercy; and they will be glad to meet all the requirements of the Divine Government, and in so doing will be blessed.

Having terminated this work of the restitution of mankind to the plane of human perfection, our Lord and the Church will not be left without an occupation. Our Lord will continue, according to the Scriptures, to be at the right hand of the Majesty on High—next to the Father. After He has relinquished the oversight of earthly affairs, He will assume once more the position of Associate Administrator of the Universe, in connection with the Heavenly Father.

We are not to suppose, however, that the Father and the Lord will be kept busy hearing and deciding cases and in administering justice. Nothing of the kind will be necessary. The equilibrium will be such that there will be no necessity for deciding cases. The government of the Universe will go on so smoothly as to be practically without a head, and yet there will be the Head—Jehovah Himself. Next in authority to the Father will be the Son, and next to the Son will be the Church. What work will thenceforth progress is not revealed to us, except in a very indefinite manner.

Through the aid of the telescope, we understand that the fixed stars are suns, each of which seems to have its own planetary system. It is only reasonable for us to infer that, if God made this earth a planet to be inhabited, all other planets will sometime be inhabited also; and that they will be under obligation to the Heavenly Father as a part of His wonderful Universe. So far as we can understand, the power of Jehovah is boundless. When we consider the hundreds of millions of suns and planets beyond the power of human mind to comprehend, then it is reasonable to assume that the work of The Christ will be limitless; and that some such work for creatures yet unborn will be their blessed privilege to all eternity. We wonder in amazement at the magnitude of God's goodness to us, who has lifted us up from our low condition and who will exalt to future glories interminable those faithful ones who make sure their calling and election to glory, honor and immortality.—Z. '13:51-54.

Humility an Element of True Courage

"Be not wise in thine own eyes: fear the Lord and depart from evil."—Prov. 3:7.

NOTHING is more dangerous to the child of God than self-conceit; it hinders reformation of heart, as well as true usefulness to others, and especially usefulness in God's service; for the Word declares, "God resisteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble." (James 4:6.) The Scriptures everywhere make prominent the fact that those who would be in harmony with God must be humble. The Lord bestows blessings upon the humble, the meek, the teachable. Jesus said, "Blessed are the meek." (Matt. 5:5.) The Apostle exhorts, "Humble yourselves therefore under the mighty hand of God, that He may exalt you in due time."—1 Pet. 5:6.

The Word of God points to the fact that Jesus was meek and lowly. (Matt. 11:29, 30.) This humility of mind and heart was, in many respects, the secret of His success. If He had not been humble, He would not have attained to the glorious station to which He was exalted.

There is a marked contrast between Jesus and Satan. The one thought to exalt himself, and the Other to **humble** Himself. (Isa. 14:13, 14; Phil. 2:8.) Satan said, "I will elevate myself above the other angels; I will be like the Most High, and exert such a power as He does. I could show the angels very great wisdom if I were in control of affairs." Inspired by this wrong spirit, Satan became ambitious to make an exhibition of what he could do.

The Scriptures give us to understand that Satan's inordinate desire to gain distinction was the secret of his fall. Ambition is good, but only when it is based upon humility. Any spirit that does not respect God's Wisdom is indeed foolish.

Satan's spirit was one of **ambition** and **pride.** Already highly favored of God as one of the highest rank of angels, he was not content with his great honors and blessings, but was desirous of attaining still greater influence and power than God had been pleased to grant him. This unlawful aspiration to obtain control led him not only to rebel against the Divine Government, but also to become the "murderer" (John 8:44) of our first parents, that he might gain control over them—the object of his ambition.

How short-sighted was the Adversary, that he should think to out-general Jehovah, and to exalt himself and erect a rival Kingdom! Soon Satan's folly will be manifested. When the Lord's due time shall come, the One who humbled Himself in obedience to the Father's will shall be exalted to kingly power and authority, to the position at the Father's right hand in the Kingdom of the Universe; but the one who attempted the usurpation shall be bound and utterly destroyed.

Humility Precedes Exaltation

Our Lord Jesus took a different course from that of Satan. Instead of trying to exercise power He had supreme reverence for Jehovah. He said, "I delight to do Thy will, O My God." (Psa. 40:8.) Following this course of humility in the presence of the great Eternal One, Jesus was led of the Father as He would not have been if He had had a self-sufficient spirit. Under the Father's guidance He was humiliated. He "learned obedience by the things which He suffered" (Heb. 5:8.); and after His death and resurrection He received the reward of the Divine nature. He became Heir of all the gracious promises of God's Word, "Heir of all things."—Hebrews 1:2.

These two great examples afford us an impressive lesson. They show us that if we copy the ambitious and self-wise attitude of Satan, it will estrange us from God. We should realize the Wisdom of God and submit ourselves fully to His will. If we walk obediently in the footsteps of the Master, we shall attain glory and honor with our Lord.

The Wisdom of God is foolishness with men. The people of this world are leaning to their own understanding. People sometimes boast along this very line, saying, "I have some ideas of my own." We all find that what we know is but very little and generally very incorrect. Experience is an excellent teacher.

The lessons that we have learned in the School of Christ are to a great extent those of humility, a great deal of which is required of pupils in that School. The path of life is so narrow that those who love the broad garish way would not think of walking in the narrow one. The Lord is allowing those who are self-conceited to turn aside. Even though they started out to walk in His way, they are permitted to go after their own foolish misunderstandings. If they continue in this course it will lead to their destruction.

Wisdom of This World Foolishness With God

As for the world, whether they live in Christian or in heathen lands, all shall come to a knowledge of the Truth. (1 Tim. 2:3, 4.) This knowledge will not be theoretical, for mankind will be brought to it through practical experience. In fact the whole world is getting a great lesson now. When the New Dispensation is ushered in and the Truth is made plain, mankind will perceive how very foolish they have been. They will see the unwisdom of the greater part of their course. "For the wisdom of their wise men shall perish."—Isa. 29:14.

It will be a hard experience for mankind to realize what clumsy efforts they have made along different lines. If scientists and philosophers, when asked as to God, had said, "We do not know," they could have been respected for their honesty. But they have boasted about geology, evolution, etc., and have pretended to know all the secrets of the Universe. What shame will be theirs when confronted with the facts! It will be a severe chastisement for them to perceive how foolish they have been and to know that others are aware of their folly.

The truly noble soul feels humbled upon the borders of the vast unknown, thankfully accepts the Divine Revelation as to his nature, origin, destiny, etc., and patiently awaits the Lord's good time for a fuller understanding of all the mysteries of His wondrous grace.—Z. '13:57, 58.

Storms on the Sea of Life

"He maketh the storm a calm."—Psalm 107:29.

IF THERE is anything in the world which causes a man to feel his own littleness it is a storm at sea. The voyagers realize that no human arm could calm that storm. The text, then, refers to the Almighty One, our Heavenly Father. Our Heavenly Father, however, always uses instrumentalities. The Scriptures tell us that after He had created one great being, He rested. This One was the Logos, the Only Begotten of the Father, the First-born of all creation. (Colossians 1:15; Revelation 3:14.) All the power the Father has since exercised has been through the Lord Jesus.

The passage of Scripture used as our text may not have been understood fully and completely by the Psalmist, the one who uttered this prophecy. Like many other Scriptures it has a special application to the Church of Christ. The Apostle Paul tells us that these things were written beforehand for our admonition, instruction. (1 Corinthians 10:11.) We believe that nearly all the prophecies recognize the Lord and His Body first. There have been many storms permitted by the Lord to come upon the little company of His followers. Sometimes the whole journey of life has been a stormy one. We sometimes sing, "When the storms of life are raging." In his Epistles, the Apostle intimates that those who do not have storms, trials and difficulties lack proof that they are God's children; for God would not be dealing with such as His children.—Hebrews 12:7, 8.

If we are children of God, we need to have trials and testings, that these may make us meet for the inheritance of the saints in light. (Colossians 1:12.) In all these experiences, the tendency of the trial is to drive us nearer to the Lord, to make us feel that we need the Divine shelter and care. And so a blessing comes out of these storms. We are not to think of God as making these storms, either literal or figurative. Satan is the great Enemy. While literal storms come about by natural laws, apparently, yet there may be a power exercised by spirit beings to produce them. During our Lord's ministry a storm of this kind was raised on the Sea of Galilee. The storm was so sudden and so great that, although the lake is not very large, the boat seemed in danger of going down, and the disciples, although experienced fishermen, were in terror. Jesus was asleep in the end of the boat. They came to Him and said, "Master! carest Thou not that we perish?"

Storms a Test of Faith

Satan knew that Jesus and the disciples were in the boat on the sea. Perhaps he thought that by causing this storm he could destroy Jesus and thwart the Father's Plan. Jesus rebuked the storm. This He would not have done, we suppose, if it had been caused by the Father. Then He applied the lesson to the disciples, saying, "O ye of little faith, why did ye doubt?"

The Lord's evident intention in letting the storm go as far as it did was to test the faith of the disciples, and to give a lesson such as this text is giving us now. It would cause them to remember in future years, in all their difficulties, whether from their own imperfections, or the imperfections of others, or as the result of the work of fallen angels, that all things were under Divine oversight. This also we should remember: **We have the assurance that all these things will work for good to us,** and that He will with the temptation provide also a way of escape, that we may be able to bear it.—1 Cor. 10:13.

This was illustrated in the storm on the sea, and the Lord's act in rebuking the storm. So if we have trials and difficulties, we should cry unto the Lord —we should exercise faith enough to cry unto Him. It should not be that blind faith which would say, "Whatever the fates have ordained, that is my portion; and there is no escape." This latter is the condition of the heathen, but is not the case with us. The Lord allows the storms to press us more and more so that we will cry unto Him. Then He will hear us and give us the necessary deliverance. He may not always make it a very speedy deliverance, but He will make a way for us to escape. We must remember also that it is the New Creature with which He is dealing. These storms may be right **inside,** in our own person—storms of passion, of anger, of resentment. These we are not to allow to go on; but we are to cry for the Lord's help, that we may be overcomers of these storms—trials.

Great Storm of Wrath Coming

This incident on the Sea of Galilee pictures what the Lord is doing for the Church now, and what He will do in the future for the world. He intends to deliver the whole world from sin and death, which have had a long reign of six thousand years. This period has been one continuous storm, with occasional brief lulls. Meantime the world is receiving certain great lessons as to the desirability of harmony with God. By and by they will come to understand, and will then greatly appreciate the importance of being fully in accord with God and very obedient to the Divine direction. Thus a foundation stone is being laid in their education for the next Age.

Finally, this storm on Galilee seems to picture very graphically the great time of trouble with which this Age will end. Then the reign of Satan will cease, and the reign of Messiah will begin. We are not to think of Jesus' Kingdom as bringing about the great time of trouble. The Scriptural thought seems rather to be that Christ's work in the present time is with the Church, and that with the completion of the Church, with the glorification of the Church, Christ's Kingdom will be set up. This Day of Trouble will be more particularly the Day of Jehovah. In this, Divine Justice will have a hand.

We do not mean, however, to exclude the Lord Jesus, for He is the chief factor in all that God does. But when the Kingdom of Messiah comes, it will exercise a restraining power—will bring down the lofty, will turn the wrath of man so as to cause it to praise God. This wrath of man will bring "a time of trouble such as never was since there was a nation." In some of the Scriptural pictures it is represented as a whirlwind, and in others it is represented as a great tidal wave—the sea and the waves will roar. Then in the midst of a great storm, which will be sufficient to wreck the whole human fabric, Messiah's Kingdom will be set up. It will cause wars to cease. Satan will be bound. The light of the knowledge of the glory of God will fill the whole earth. "The desire of all nations shall come," and will be recognized in the making of the storm a calm, by this Kingdom of Messiah.—Z. '13:150, 151.

What "Corrupt Communication" Signifies

"Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth; but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers."—Eph. 4:29.

CORRUPT communication is the spreading of evil report or message instead of good. Our text might be understood to mean a corrupting communication according to the course of ordinary conversation. Our minds might get us into all kinds of difficulty with ourselves and with others, if we did not keep a rein upon them and hold them within certain bounds; but our tongues might do even more injury than our minds. What we may think injures only ourselves; but if our tongues come into the matter, not only are our own minds defiled, but there is contagion, there is rancor; for the tongue spreads the matter all around. And whether the matter be true or false, the influence is corrupting, degrading, tending, perhaps, at times even toward immorality.

It would appear that not only amongst the worldly, but amongst the Lord's people there is a tendency to relate little incidents or make little remarks which, while not necessarily sinful, tend to cause sprouts of evil to develop. It is along this line that the Apostle says we should let no corrupt communication proceed out of our mouth. If, by any mischance, any corrupting information has come to our attention, we should see to it that it goes no further. We have sometimes wondered whether it is the quality of the natural mind to use the tongue to the disadvantage of others, or whether evil spirits have something to do with it.

Let us, as the Apostle enjoins, drop evil communications; shun them, and hold fast only to that which is edifying—the word "edifying" having in it the thought of an edifice, a building, the up-building of each other.

Broad Scope for Conversation on Riches of God's Grace

But some, even of those who profess to love the Lord and to be trying to walk in his footsteps, will say, "I never speak anything but the truth; and I mean no harm to anybody; but I must have something to talk about when my neighbors come in, and many of them would think me tiresome if I should try to interest them in religious matters." But it is evil speaking, slander all the same, and the scandalmonger, however refined his methods or words, well knows that so far from the scandal ministering grace to the hearer, it ministers evil; that the hearer, impelled by the forces of his fallen human nature, goes out to tell the scandal to others. The fallen nature feasts and revels in just such things, deluding many that they are thus moralizing, preaching against sin, and that in thus discussing and impliedly denouncing the transgressions of another, they are mentioning matters abhorrent to themselves. Alas! their reasoning is seriously defective when the Lord's counsels in righteousness are ignored.

There is surely broad scope for conversation among Christian people on the subject of the riches of God's grace in Christ Jesus our Lord, expressed in the exceeding great and precious promises of the Divine Word. In these things we have indeed that which not only ministers grace to the hearer, but that which adds also to the grace of the speaker. It showers blessing on every hand so far as the New Creature is concerned, and assists in deadening the old nature with its evil desires, tastes and appetites.

This, evidently, is what the Apostle had in mind when he said that the Lord's people should "show forth the praises of him who called us out of darkness, into his marvelous light." And a heart filled with the spirit of love, the spirit of God, the spirit of the Truth, and overflowing with the same will be sure to bestow it upon others; for, "Out of the abundance of the heart, the mouth speaketh"; "Blessed are the pure in heart."—1 Peter 2:9; Matt. 12:34; 5:8; Z. '11:62, 63.

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This will be a momentous year—a glorious year! Then let us all "be strong and very courageous." —Z. '14:232.

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The Truth is a searcher and discerner of hearts, and a separator.—Z. '09:330.

◇

It is as important today as ever that we keep before our minds the thought of our Lord's personal relationship to every feature of his work.—Z. '09:5.

◇

If the present movement among the Lord's people is under the Lord's supervision at all, the Lord is responsible, and can be trusted to accomplish his own ends in his own best way.—Z. '07: 294, 295.

◇

"Are ye able to drink of My cup?"—Matthew 20:20-23. Who knows what this year may bring forth! Who knows but that there may be some special trial, cup of suffering or ignominy, for the loyal followers of the Lamb. It seems well that we should have this text especially before our minds, "Are ye able to drink of My cup?" Let us answer as did the two disciples on that occasion, "We are able." This was not a boast on their part. It was merely a declaration of their full decision that, whatever circumstances or conditions might arise, they had no thought of any other course than that of obedience to the Lord and of following in His footsteps.—Z. '15:11.

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We must expect that the opposition of the world, the flesh and the Devil will increase in virulence. Thus our faith in the Lord and in each other—our meekness, gentleness, patient endurance, long-suffering, brotherly kindness, love—will be in the crucible for refining. And the experiences, properly received, may be reckoned amongst the "all things" guaranteed to work together for good to all those who love the Lord, to the called according to his purpose.—Rom. 8:28; Z. '11:462.

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It is well for the Lord's people, when in a time of stress and trouble, to look with faith toward the Lord, remembering that their tears and sorrow may be made to them, under Divine providence, a great blessing. Martha and Mary, ministering to their sick brother, thought of how much the Lord loved him, and sent Jesus a message respecting Lazarus' condition, leaving the matter in Jesus' hands, trusting to His wisdom and grace. Yet they were permitted to pass into the still darker shadows of the sepulcher. The brother died and was buried. Yea, the Master whom they trusted in as the Messiah had not alleviated the sickness, had not hindered the dying, had even permitted several days to elapse without sending a message to them.

So with us it may likewise be true that the Lord will be pleased to permit trials, sorrows, tears and difficulties for our sakes, that thus we may receive some important lessons which otherwise we could not so well learn. One of these lessons is that we must trust the Lord where we cannot trace Him, that we must remember His promise that "**all things shall work together for good to them that love Him.**"—Z. '17:105.

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We should be specially on guard against **jealousy, envy, hatred** and **strife.** We cannot doubt that much of the final testing of the "very Elect" will be along these lines. "Who shall be able to stand?" is a question, therefore, that appeals to all those who have taken their stand for the Lord, for righteousness, for truth—their stand for love of God and of the brethren. If, indeed, we have consecrated our lives, to lay down our lives in the service of the Lord and his truth and in the service of the brethren, what should it not mean to us as respects the manifestation of that love and faithfulness! Any root of bitterness, any word of bitterness, any thought of jealousy entering into our hearts might mean the defilement of not only the brother or sister against whom these are directed, but would surely mean the poisoning of our own hearts, the destruction therein of the spirit of love, the Spirit of the Lord; and possibly this evil spirit, far from the Lord, proceeding from us, might contaminate many members of the Body of Christ for their defilement. How much on guard, therefore, each of us ought to be; how we should analyze our thoughts, our motives, our intentions to see that they are all square perfectly with the law of love to the extent that our Lord indicated, saying, "A new commandment I give unto you, that ye love one another as I have loved you;" to the extent of being willing to die for each other's interests and welfare and honor!—Z. '08:236-237.

◆

It was in Job's defence that God permitted him to be tried to the utmost that the loyalty of his heart might be manifest. Some of his poor comforters viewed Job's afflictions only in the light of chastisements, failing utterly to comprehend the divine purpose, and this only added stings to his afflictions; but through them all the Lord brought his servant and most fully vindicated him in the eyes of all the people.—Z. '94:333.

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Let each of us prove our mettle. The hosts of Heaven are looking down upon us. We do not fight alone. Strength all-sufficient will be ours for every day and hour and moment.—Z. '17:246.

◆

The child of God who would have a perfect faith, a perfect trust in God and his promises, must needs remember that they are applicable only to a certain class, namely, to the sincere, the honest-hearted.—Z. '05:299.

We sometimes sing, "Thou art coming to a King, large petitions with thee bring," but he who brings large petitions to the throne of grace should be sure also that he bring with him a large alabaster box of perfume for the Lord—not hoping thereby to merit the Lord's favor nor to perfume his requests, but as a mark of his appreciation of blessings already received. Those who bring the alabaster boxes of perfume of praise and thankfulness very generally have little to ask. Rather they realize that they are already debtors to such an extent that they can never show properly their appreciation of divine favor. Properly they recognize that day by day they are receiving at the Lord's hands exceedingly and abundantly more than they could ask or wish, and that in the spiritual blessings alone they have what satisfies their longings as nothing else can do. Such more nearly follow the course of Mary and bring alabaster boxes of perfume to the Lord—their prayers and thanksgiving of heart; and asking nothing, but giving thanks for all things, they receive from the Master such an outpour of blessing that they are not able to contain it.

Those who view the matter rightly must certainly feel that none of us have anything worthy to present to our Lord—that our very best, our most costly gifts or sacrifices, are not worthy of him and but feebly express the real sentiments of our hearts. How glad we are if our humble efforts are accepted of the Lord, and how we hope that ultimately we shall hear the same sweet voice saying of us, "He hath done what he could," "She hath done what she could."—Z. '05:104.

◆

A channel of blessing and instruction which the Lord has provided and commended for the saints, and which surely has proven a blessing, is the assistance which the Lord supplies to us through the "brethren." Sometimes it is "A word in season; how good it is!"—perhaps a word of counsel, perhaps a word of reproof, perhaps a word of instruction. Perhaps it is merely the testimony of daily lives of the brethren, as we see them patiently enduring hardness as good soldiers, without murmuring—taking with joy, with thankfulness, with faith, with confidence, all things which Divine providence may permit, assured that they are all working out future blessing. Although this channel of blessing might at first seem to be of the brethren, we are sure, nevertheless, that it is of the Lord, though through the brethren. It is because the brethren who render such assistance in the way are the brethren who themselves are receiving assistance from the Lord.—Z. '10:260.

◆

There never has been a time like the present when it is so necessary to be of sober mind and watch and pray. Never has it been so important for us to have overspreading love for all the brethren.—Z. '18:22.

◆

All New Creatures in Christ are to keep **Sabbath** every day. And so the Apostle says, "We who have believed do enter into rest"—have entered into rest. It is not that our muscles or our brains are necessarily resting, but that we have the rest of heart, the rest of mind, the peace of God which passeth all understanding. It is important that we maintain this peace at all times, and do not let anything come in which would interfere with it and take us out of harmony with God. If it does, we should consider that we have broken the Sabbath command.—Z. '13:361.

◆

Those who have more opportunities for service are less liable to be led into temptation than are those who have fewer.—Z. '13:85.

◆

Whoever, having received the Spirit of the Lord, allows a wrong spirit of the flesh to return and to displace the spirit of the New Creature, will in that proportion go into darkness.

This darkness will not only cause the person to become more quarrelsome in disposition, but will affect him also in respect to his spiritual vision. As the enlightenment of the Holy Spirit gives him a better knowledge of the deep things of God, so, in proportion as this Spirit is lost, the knowledge of the deep things will vanish, until there will be gross darkness. The individual will then be in the same condition as the world in respect to spiritual things. No matter what he once knew and saw, he will not henceforth be able to understand these things; for "The secret of the Lord is with them that fear Him" reverence Him. (Psa. 25:14.) To whatever extent we lose the Spirit of the Lord, the Spirit of love, loyalty and obedience, to that extent we lose its illumination.—Z. '12:290.

◆

We are not to guage ourselves entirely by what our fellow-men might think, but to have special respect to the Lord and his judgment of us. Hence the Apostle argues, Let us not, therefore, judge (condemn) one another any more, but let our judgment rather turn to ourselves, to see that nothing in our conduct toward our brethren shall be in any sense of the word contrary to our Master's new law of love. Watching that law carefully, and applying it to ourselves, we will be hindered from any course of conduct which would tend to stumble a brother: and such a love for the brethren as would lead us to the renouncement of our own liberties where necessary would certainly be pleasing in the sight of the Lord and the heavenly Father, and assure us a place and a higher honor than would otherwise be ours.—Z. '07:333.

◆

We have found that it was often by bringing us into severe trials, ordeals, putting us under crucial tests, that the Lord develops more and more our faith, our love, our trust, our hope in him. He would have us learn well our lesson, that without him we can do nothing, but that with his blessing and favor all things are ours, because we are Christ's and Christ is God's.—Z. '07:104.

◆

We have records of disasters permitted to come upon our Lord and upon the Apostles and upon the Church of that time—hatred of the world, thwarting of their plans, cruel mockings, stripes, in perils of shipwreck, in perils among false brethren, hungering, thirsting, etc. If God manifested his favor thus to our Lord and the most influential members of his Church and their associates, what shall we choose for ourselves? If we allow the Lord to choose our portion for us, he doubtless will give us similar experiences in this time, and glory, honor and immortality by and by. If we attempt to choose our own way, the Adversary will try to delude us and we may be relieved of some physical pains or difficulties, which might have been for our eternal welfare. Let us choose the better part, pray for the spiritual things and labor for them, and accept, as respects our earthly affairs, whatsoever our Father sees best!—Z. '09:22.

◆

When pestilence is in the air, it inoculates a person without his being conscious of the fact, and it is thus that we, "the feet" members of the Body of Christ, are exposed to special trials and dangers —spiritual pestilence.—Z. '15:374.

◆

Every error held obscures and hinders some truth; and we have now come to the time when every child of God needs all the panoply of Truth —the armor of God. He who has not on the "whole armor of God" is sure to fall into error in this "evil day," this "hour of temptation, which has come upon the whole world, to try them that dwell on the earth." And "judgment must begin at the House of God." Who shall be able to stand?—Z. 15:343.

◆

Let us remember that God has promised to keep and guide the minds of those whose hearts are loyal and true to Him. We should therefore conclude that if the Lord is thrusting any one out of the Light as unworthy of it, into the outer darkness of the world, if He is permitting unfaithful ones to be seduced by the great enemy, it is not our mission to follow them into the outer darkness by reading, conversation, etc. We are to remain with the Lord and those who are walking in the light.—Z. '16:262.

◆

Eternity alone will show the value of some of the little things, the feeble efforts put forth in the name of the Lord; and this reminds us that our Lord is judging us by our faithfulness in little things and small opportunities rather than by our great achievements.—Z. '08:44.

◆

Time and again our attention has been called to the fact that strife amongst the brethren is an evidence of spiritual sickness, and if persisted in would lead to spiritual death.—Z. '17:88.

◆

The old sailor had the right idea who said that if he were certain that the Lord had commanded him to jump through a stone wall, he would jump at the wall and leave to the Lord all that was beyond his power. So it is with us in all the affairs of life. We are to make sure that we are in the Lord's way, that we are following His directions; and then we are to leave all the results to Him.—Z. '17:60.

◆

A little while and all the faithful, as members of his Body, shall have filled up the measure of his sufferings and shall enter his glory. Then shortly his glory will be revealed, and all flesh shall see it; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it.—Isa. 40:5; Z. '08:102.

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